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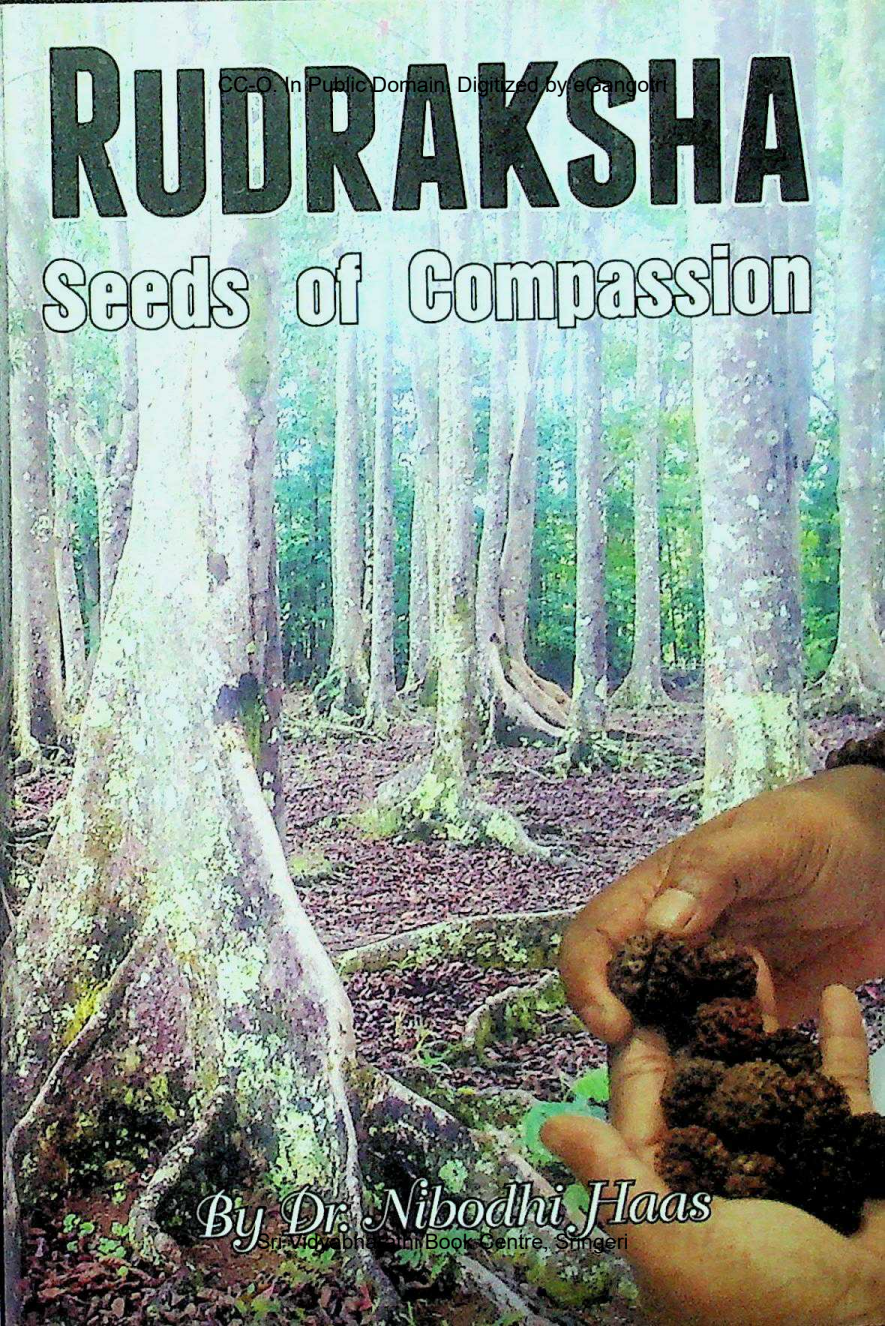
RUDRAKSHA

Seeds of Compassion



By Dr. Nibodhi Haas

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Rudraksha

Seeds of compassion

By Dr. Nibodhi Haas M.D. (A.M.)

Sri Vidyabharathi Book Centre, Sringeri

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RUDRAKSHA
Seeds of compassion

By: Dr. Nibodhi Haas

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Dukhonkicintadurkarde
Bhava bhakti kadilamebhar de
Tava caranomekarumearpan
Tereliyema he ye jivan

Please remove all worries and sorrows.
Fill my heart with devotion towards You.
I offer myself in worship at Your feet.
Mother, this life is only for You.

This book is a manifestation of the
inspiration, encouragement
and grace of our beloved Amma,
Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi.
I humbly offer this book at Her Sacred Lotus Feet.

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Sri Mata Amritanandamayi Devi

Through Her extraordinary acts of love and self-sacrifice, Mata Amritanandamayi, or Amma (Mother) as She is known, has endeared Herself to millions of people around the world. Tenderly caressing everyone who comes to Her, holding them close to Her heart in a loving embrace, Amma shares boundless love with all – regardless of their beliefs, who they are or why they have come to Her. In this simple yet powerful way, Amma is transforming the lives of countless people, helping their hearts to blossom, one embrace at a time. In the past 38 years, Amma has physically hugged more than 32 million people from all parts of the world.

Her tireless spirit of dedication to uplifting others has inspired a vast network of charitable activities through which people are discovering the sense of peace that comes from selflessly serving others.

Amma's teachings are universal. Whenever She is asked about her religion, She replies that Her religion is love. She does not ask anyone to believe in God or to change their faith, but only to inquire into their own real nature and to believe in themselves.

Among the wide array of charitable projects that have been inspired by Amma are free homes for the

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poor, disaster relief work, an orphanage, free food, medicine and pensions for destitute women, sponsored weddings for the poor, free legal aid, prisoner's welfare programs, extensive health care programs that include multi-specialty hospitals and medical camps which offer free health care to the poor, and many schools, colleges and educational programs. For more information on Amma's charitable activities, please visit:

www.embracingtheworld.org
www.amritapuri.org
www.amma.org

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Preface

When the lover catches sight of just the hem of his beloved's sari, he is reminded of her. In the same way, the sacred ash, sandal paste, and rudraksha beads are meant to remind us of God, to kindle within us the remembrance of the Self.

– Amma

The bhakti path winds in a delicate way.
On this path there is no asking and no not asking.
The ego simply disappears the moment you touch him.
The joy of looking for him is so
immense that you just dive in,
and coast around like a fish in the water.
If anyone needs a head, the lover leaps up to offer his.
Kabir's poems touch on the secrets of this bhakti.

– Kabir

Bhakti yoga is the yoga (path towards union) of devotion. It is often said that bhakti yoga is the highest of all yogic paths, and all other forms of yoga are manifestations of bhakti, for there is no higher path than the path of love. This yoga is pure selfless love from the heart. A relationship between a *bhakta* (a practitioner

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of bhakti yoga) and God or the *Guru* (Spiritual Master) can never be described in words.

Amma emphasizes this: "Crying to God for five minutes is equal to one hour of meditation. If tears are not coming by themselves, try to cry by thinking, *Why am I not able to cry?* Try to develop devotion. That is the easiest way. There is a benefit in following the path of devotion. One will get bliss from the very beginning itself. The sweetness of devotion is incomparable. Once you taste it you will never like to taste the objects of the world."

There are as many ways of bhakti as the heart can fathom. Bhakti focuses on opening the spiritual heart, like a lotus blossoming in the morning sunlight. *Mantra japa*(the repetition of the names of God), singing and praying to God are the most common methods, as they help one transcend the mind and enter into the secret cave of the heart.

Amma says, "Try to sing to God with overflowing love and devotion. Let the heart melt in prayer. Unfortunate indeed are those who think that crying to God is a weakness. As the wax melts, the flame of the candle burns brighter. Through crying to God, one gains strength. It washes away the impurities of the mind. It makes the mind easily absorbed in the remembrance of God."

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This book is presented in a way that is in alignment with the bhakti path. Some of the concepts may be new or foreign to the western mind. Many of the ideas presented are based on faith, devotion and surrender. In traditional Vedic culture, these are inextricable from life. Amma says, "Even if all the creatures in the whole world love us, that cannot equal an infinitesimal fraction of the love that we experience from God in one second. There is no other love which can compare to God's love."

I pray that Amma's unconditional love, compassion and grace is felt through this book. May it awaken our innate love for Mother Nature. May Shiva's grace shine upon all.

Sankara Siva Sankara
Sankara Siva Sankara
Omkarapriya sivasankara
Kailasapriya sivasankara
Natajanapriya sivasankara
Siva sankararupa mahesvara

O auspicious one, Shiva,
embodiment of auspiciousness, O great God.
You who enjoy chanting the Om mantra,
The embodiment of Mount Kailash,

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The Lord of all beings,
O Shiva, the embodiment of auspiciousness

Om Namah Shivaya
Salutation to Lord Shiva

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Sowing the seed of love

We should grow plenty of trees and medicinal plants, because they also cleanse the air. Many diseases will be prevented if we breathe in the air that has come into contact with medicinal plants.

– Amma

For thousands of years, Hindus, Buddhists and Taoists have used the sacred rudraksha plant for healing, meditation, controlling stress and facilitating positive changes of body, mind and spirit. In India, yogis wear rudraksha beads to help control the senses and to facilitate deep states of tranquility and mental concentration. In China, rudrakshas are used to stabilize yin and yang (Shiva and Shakti) and to harmonize the body's *chi*– the life energy known as *prana* in ayurveda and yoga. Even the Zen Buddhists of Japan use rudraksha beads to induce higher states of consciousness.

The rudraksha is truly a spiritual tree. The ancient Vedic texts say that rudrakshas were formed from the tears of Lord Shiva. In Sanskrit, *Rudra* is another name for Lord Shiva and *aksha* means "tears," thus the name *rudraksha*. Shiva means "the Auspicious One." Lord Shiva represents the aspect of consciousness that is the Supreme Being, Absolute Consciousness. That

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Just as the air that passes over the rudraksha is purified, likewise, the touch of the rudraksha on the skin is also purifying.

– Amma

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Supreme Being is responsible for the cyclic process of creation, preservation, dissolution and recreation of the universe.

His cosmic dance of dissolution and recreation *(Tandava)* is often associated with the concepts of destroyer and destruction. This confusion arises when we fail to grasp the true meaning of his divine play. Creation sustains itself by a fragile and delicate balance between the forces of the real and unreal. When this harmony is disturbed and the preservation of life becomes impossible, Lord Shiva dissolves the universe. He enters a cosmic sleep, only to reawaken and create the next cycle of existence. The new creation gives another opportunity for souls to free themselves from bondage with the physical world and attain liberation. This cyclic process can be compared to the natural flow of seasons—without winter, spring cannot exist as we know it. Likewise, morning is not morning unless it follows the night.

This aspect of Lord Shiva is considered to be the Lord of Mercy and Compassion. He protects the individual soul *(jiva)* from pain and suffering. In his compassionate form, Shiva protects devotees from negative tendencies like lust, greed, jealousy and anger. He grants boons, gives grace and awakens the inherent wisdom in his devotees.

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Shiva's third eye

Shiva's "third eye" is considered the Eye of Wisdom or Knowledge. It is located at the *ajnachakra,* between the eyebrows, and is considered to be the center of divine consciousness. It is said that when the third eye opens, the *jiva* merges into the *Atman* (universal consciousness). The third eye opening is representative of the awakening of universal truth in one's consciousness. This is the awakening of the true Self, known as Self-realization.

The enlightened soul can perceive the totality of the universe. Shiva is the purest form of consciousness

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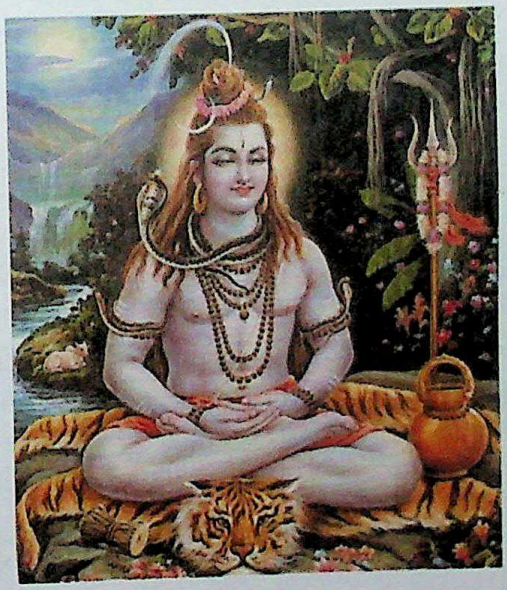
in existence. He is said to preside over everything in the universe. He creates what is needed, sustains that creation and at the correct time, destroys his own creation. When necessary, Shiva takes on the *bhava* (divine mood) of being angry. When he is in this *bhava,* fire, which represents divine perception and discrimination, shoots from his third eye and destroys all unconscious, negative tendencies. This act can be compared to a mother who yells at her child when he is going to put his hand on a hot burner or drink a toxic substance unknowingly. It is nothing but love that makes the



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mother yell. The mother has the appearance of being angry for the sake of her child. Likewise, Shiva destroys the poison of egoistic tendencies before they can manifest. When Shiva's third eye opens, it is to destroy the illusion of this world *(maya)*. Illusion refers to the concepts of separateness that cause the suffering of the world. In this aspect, Shiva is known as Rudra. Rudra means "archer;" it is synonymous with "to injure" or "to kill." Rudra kills all the negative thoughts and tendencies in his devotees.

Sivayaparamesvaraya
Chandrasekharayanamaom
Bhavayagunasambhavaya
Siva tandavayanamaom

Prostrations to Shiva, the Supreme Lord,
the one having the moon on His head.
Prostrations to that Lord who dances the Cosmic
Dance and has all auspicious qualities.

It is said that when one looks upon a rudraksha, one is actually looking into the third eye of Shiva. According to Hindu folklore, the moment Lord Shiva's third eye opened, rudraksha manifested on Earth. The seed is a dark bluish-purple, similar to the color of Shiva's skin as he is most commonly depicted. Most of these

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seeds have five facets, or faces, which represent the five senses. It is said that when Shiva's third eye opened, light emanated and burnt desire to ash. Likewise, desire is destroyed upon the opening of the inner eye. Thus, the rudraksha symbolizes the dissolution of desires and the awakening of Truth. The five-faced rudraksha represents going beyond the five senses, ultimately leading to Self-realization.

Why do we need to go beyond our desires and the five senses? It is because they are the primary cause of all suffering. Immense suffering permeates every part of the world. Desire is a process of fulfillment or denial; desires either get satisfied or thwarted. Wherever desire leads, sorrow ultimately follows. However, without an understanding of this, the wisdom to discern what leads to sorrow is lacking, and there is no end to the sorrow in our lives.

All spiritual traditions offer a means to end this suffering. In the Sanskrit text *Anguttara-nikaya,* the Buddha said:

Vediyamanassakhopanaham bhikkhave,
Idamdukkhamtipannapemiayam
dukkha-samudayotipannapemi
ayamdukkha-nirodhotipannapemiayamdukkha
nirodha-gamini-patipadatipannapemi.

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> To one who experiences sensations, such as meditators, I teach the truth of suffering (first noble truth); I teach the truth of the arising of suffering (second noble truth); I teach the truth of the cessation of suffering (third noble truth); and I teach the truth of the path leading to the cessation of suffering (fourth noble truth).

In this statement the Buddha declares that the Four Noble Truths can be understood, realized and practiced through the experience of *vedana* (sensation).

He explains these Four Noble Truths in the light of vedana by saying, "*Yam kincivedayitam, tam pi dukkhasmim*—Whatever sensations one experiences, all are suffering." Not only is *dukkhavedana* (unpleasant sensation) suffering, but *sukhavedana* (pleasant sensation) and *adukkhamasukhavedana* (neutral sensation) also lead to suffering because of their impermanent nature. Arising and passing away, *anicca* (impermanence) is the characteristic of *vedana*. Every pleasant sensation contains a seed of sorrow because it is bound to pass away. We are so engulfed by ignorance that when a pleasant sensation arises, without being aware of its true nature of impermanence, we react to it by developing a desire and attachment towards it. This leads to suffering *(tanhadukkhassasambhavam)*. Desire

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is the origin of suffering. Desire is not only the origin of suffering but it is suffering itself. As desire arises, suffering arises. Desire is not merely a pre-condition of suffering; it is itself inseparable from suffering.

Thankfully, there exists a path to the end of suffering– a gradual path of self-improvement. This path is said to be the middle way between the two extremes of excessive self-indulgence (hedonism) and excessive self-negation (asceticism); and it leads to the end of the cycle of rebirth *(samsara)*. The path to the end of suffering may last numerous lifetimes, throughout which every individual rebirth is subject to karmic conditioning *(samskaras)*. The causative factors of suffering being desire, ignorance, delusion, and its effects will disappear gradually as progress is made on the path.

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The rudraksha tree

The rudraksha tree is a large, evergreen, broad-leafed tree scientifically known as *Elaeocarpus Ganitrus Roxb.* Rudraksha also refers to the seed from this tree. Its habitat starts at sea level and goes up to two thousand meters. Geographically, it is found to grow naturally in tropical and subtropical areas. The trees can reach from fifty to two hundred feet in height. Rudrakshas grow in only a few places in the world, including the Himalayas of Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, Australia, Hawaii and Indonesia. There are said to be thirty-eight different varieties of rudrakshas. Rudraksha trees produce small, white, sweet-smelling flowers, which blossom in the rainy season. Usually, when these trees are at least five years old they produce a bright blue fruit. Within this fruit is the rudraksha seed. These seeds have ridges running throughout their diameter determining their number of faces, called *mukhis.*

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History and legend

The rudraksha seed symbolizes total surrender. The beads are strung on a thread, which forms a mala. The beads are held by that thread. Each of us is a pearl strung on the thread of the Self. A rudraksha mala reminds us of this truth and teaches us to completely surrender to God.

–Amma

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No other tree is endowed with as much legend as the rudraksha. Multiple spiritual texts describe divine qualities present in rudraksha seeds. The center of the seeds is filled only with a delicate fiber, making them easy to carve and ideal to wear as beads. One important aspect of rudrakshas are that they are worn and worshipped by absolutely everyone, regardless of spiritual orientation, sect, ethnicity, caste or gender. It is believed that one who worships and wears rudrakshas will invoke the grace of Lord Shiva. Rudrakshas are also used to help destroy negativities and overcome obstacles. Wearing rudraksha beads has no adverse effects. They are even believed to promote peace of mind and prosperity for the whole family.

It is thought that wearing rudrakshas will help remove the consequences of negative karma due to previous actions. Rudrakshas are also said to help one progress on the spiritual journey, due to Shiva's blessings. Ultimately, one who wears rudraksha beads attains peace and purity in thought, word and deed.

Wearing rudraksha accompanied by pearls, crystal, silver, gold and other precious stones invokes the strength of Shiva. Wearing rudraksha pleases not only Lord Shiva, but also all the deities (divine cosmic energies) governing the nine planets. Thus, wearing rudrakshas helps to destroy astrological and planetary

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afflictions, conquer the fear of untimely death and pave a pathway to a peaceful and harmonic life.

Rudraksha seeds have been used for thousands of years for medicinal, ritualistic, astrological and spiritual purposes. There are numerous texts extolling the glory of rudraksha. Of these, the most noted are *Shiva Maha Purana, Shrimad Devi Bhagavatam, Padma Purana, Mahakaala Samhita, Mantramahanava, Rudraksha-jabalopanishad* and *Shivaswarodaya*. The origins of rudrakshas are expounded in these texts.

Divya Varsha Sahasram Tu Chakshurunmeelitmayaa,
Paschanmaakulkshyah Patita Jalbindavah.
Tatrashrubindto Jaata Maharudraksh Vriskshkah,
Mamaagyayaa Mahasen Sarvesham Hitkamyayaa

For one thousand divine years I kept closed
my eyes then teardrops fell from my eyes.
Those drops of tears that fell from my eyes
gave birth to the tree of Maharudraksh on
my command for the benefit of all.

– *Shiva Maha Purana*

One story from the *Shiva Maha Purana* recounts the time that Shiva's consort Parvati asked Shiva the origins of rudraksha. Shiva said he was tired of keeping his eyes closed for so long, so he opened them and a

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few teardrops fell to the earth. From these tears, the rudraksha sprouted. The seeds were then distributed as Lord Shiva's prasad.

Another story explains that for the welfare of all living beings, Shiva spent a long time in a very deep state of meditation. After returning from this state of meditation, Shiva opened his eyes, saw the suffering of humanity, and teardrops of his compassion fell to the earth. From these teardrops, rudrakshas sprang forth.

Yet another story tells that Shiva was saddened by the death of his wife Gauri. He roamed about here and there in search of her, but Gauri was nowhere to be found. The Lord started to cry. As his tears fell to Earth, they took seed form and became rudraksha trees.

The following story is from the *Devi Bhagwat Purana*. Once there was a demon who performed tremendous austerities and became very strong, having attained many *siddhis* (spiritual powers). Due to these *siddhis,* he became filled with ego and pride. He started to cause trouble for the yogis, rishis and gods. He was so powerful that no one could defeat him in battle. He built three cities made from three different types of metals: gold, silver and iron. These cities were indestructible and became known as Tripura. Ruling these cities with his two brothers, he became known as *Tripurasura*—the demon of three cities. Tripurasura

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started a vicious war against the Gods. Eventually, he even defeated Indra, the King of the Gods, and took over the kingdom of peace.

Downtrodden, helpless and powerless, the gods went to seek help from Lord Brahma. Lord Brahma said that even he, the Creator, could not beat Tripurasura in battle. He told the other gods to ask Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu said even he could not defeat Tripurasura in battle, and told them to seek out Lord Shiva. So, all the gods, Brahma and Vishnu included, went to seek Lord Shiva's grace for destroying Tripurasura before he destroyed everything.

Brahma, Vishnu and all the gods told Shiva of their plight. Shiva, always ready to serve his devotees, told them that he would destroy Tripurasura. He ordered a special chariot to be built. This mystic chariot was made from earth; the wheels were formed from the sun and moon, Lord Vishnu himself became the arrow of Shiva's bow and the Lord Brahma was the charioteer.

After completing the chariot, Lord Shiva, along with Brahma, Vishnu, Indra and all the other gods, went into battle to kill Tripurasura. When Shiva was prepared to shoot the arrow, all the gods entered into a devotional mood and started to pray for grace and success in the mission. Lord Shiva shot the arrow, killed Tripurasura, and the three cities fell.

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After the battle, Shiva and the other gods went to the Himalayas. Lord Shiva closed his eyes and entered into deep meditation. When he opened his eyes, tears poured onto the earth. Those tears became rudraksha trees.

It is thus believed that the rudraksha contains secrets of the evolution of creation, as if mystically infused for the benefit of all human beings. These mystical powers are believed to interact in all fields of human existence, influencing health and prosperity. They are used for protection, and ultimately lead to freedom from all suffering—Self-realization.

According to Hindu and Vedic scriptures, rudraksha beads are to be respected as the holiest items embodied with *shakti* (spiritual powers). The scriptures state that rudraksha can bring spiritual and material well-being to the wearer, as well as medicinal and astrological benefits. The shakti of the rudraksha is associated with the number of mukhis (faces or facets) on a seed. The number of mukhis can be determined by counting the lines or grooves that run from bottom to top on the surface of the seed. For example, if a rudraksha has five lines, it is called a five-mukhi or five-faced rudraksha.

Yogis and spiritual seekers *(sadhaks)* have used rudrakshas for thousands of years to cultivate physical, mental and spiritual well-being, and ultimately to

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lead them towards enlightenment and liberation. The *Skanda Purana* declares, "Even if one happens to be slack in the observance of other daily religious duties, the wearing of rudraksha absolves one from all sins." The *Srimad Devi Bhagavatam* states, "One is benefited by simply looking at or touching a rudraksha." In the *Padma Purana,* it is said, "If the rudraksha is worn on the body, it will magnify the fruit of meritorious action a millionfold."

The *Shiva Purana* explains, "If a person is not liberated after meditation and acquisition of knowledge, he shall wear rudraksha. He shall be free of all sins (karma) and attain the highest goal. If anyone wears rudraksha during the day, he will be freed of sins committed during the night; if he wears it during the night, he will be free of sins committed during the day."

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Ayurveda

What is Ayurveda?

May the tree of our life be firmly
rooted in the soil of love.
Let the good deeds be the leaves on that tree;
May words of kindness form its flowers;
May peace be its fruit.
Let us grow and unfold as one family, united in love
So that we may rejoice and celebrate our oneness
In a world where peace and contentment prevail.

– Amma

Ayurveda is a holistic system of medicine from India, which has been practiced for thousands of years. It is the ancient science of living in harmony with our Self and our environment. The knowledge of Ayurveda expounds spiritual insights for living happy, healthy and peaceful lives while seeking the ultimate goal of Self-realization. It describes the nature of the universe with all its manifestations and how to bring oneself into harmony with it. The science of Ayurveda is based on the understanding that the whole universe is interconnected and interdependent.

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The word Ayurveda is composed of two words: *ayu,* meaning "life," and *veda*, meaning "knowledge." Thus, Ayurveda literally means "knowledge of life." In Ayurveda, the process of *ayu* is considered as a combined state of body, senses, emotions, psyche/mind and soul. *Ayu* refers to all stages of life, including birth, childhood, and adulthood, as well as the process of dying and going beyond death. Thus, Ayurveda has individualized applications for all stages in the journey of life.

Overall, Ayurveda aims to provide guidance regarding food and lifestyle so that healthy people can stay healthy and those with health challenges can improve their health. Ayurveda is a set of practical, simple guidelines for creating longevity and well-being. By applying these guidelines, one can live in harmony with the environment and refrain from disease.

There are several aspects to Ayurveda that make it a unique system of healing. It is based on a constitutional model, and recommendations are often different for each person even if they present similar symptoms. Ayurveda reflects an understanding that there are energetic forces that influence Nature and human beings. These forces are called *tridoshas*. The universe is made up of five great elements: ether, air, fire, water and Earth. All of creation is a dance or a play

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of these five elements. They interact together to make up the three *doshas* or bodily humors—*vata*, *pita* and *kapha*. The word dosha actually means "impurity" or "imbalance." The doshas are responsible for biological, psychological and physiological processes in our body, mind and consciousness. When in harmony, they sustain balance within us.

Another unique aspect of Ayurveda is the focus on balancing the *gunas*. The gunas are the universal qualities of the fluctuations in the mind. They each manifest on a universal cosmic level and on an individual level, including in our own bodies and in all of Nature. The three gunas are never separate; they support and intermingle with one another. They are as intimately related as the flame, the ghee and the wick of a lamp. They form the very substance of *prakriti* (Divine as manifest Nature). All objects are composed of the three gunas, which act on one another. They are known as *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. In the *Chandogya Upanishad,* it is said that *aum* is the totality of the three gunas. *"A"* is the state of sattva, and is the waking state or the subjective consciousness. This is represented by *Brahma*, the Creator. *"U"* is rajas and the dream state. This is represented by *Vishnu,* the preserver. *"M"* is

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tamas, the *yogic* sleep state of undifferentiated awareness. This is represented by Shiva, the destroyer or the great transformer.

The three gunas are contained within every being. One of the three gunas is generally predominant in a person. A *sattvic* person is virtuous and leads a pure and pious life. When sattva prevails, one is calm and tranquil. One reflects and meditates. A *rajasic* person is passionate and active. When rajas prevails, one does various sorts of worldly activities. A *tamasic* person is dull and inactive. When tamas prevails, one becomes lazy and careless. Tamas generates delusion. Sattva makes one divine and noble; rajas makes one human and selfish; and tamas makes one animalistic and ignorant. For example, a sage or saint will be sattvic, while a soldier, politician and businessman is rajasic. We as human beings have the great blessing to be able to consciously alter the gunas in our bodies and minds. Until enlightenment, the gunas cannot be separated or removed by oneself. Yet, through conscious action and awareness, lifestyle practices and thoughts, the gunas may be acted upon in order to increase or decrease them.

Sattva is the pure manifestation of the cosmic and individual mind. Sattva is pure light, *dharma* (righteous action), consciousness, creativity and the power of

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observation. Sattva gives the power of discrimination, knowledge and the ability to know truth. The pure state of sattva manifests as peace, harmony, contentment, compassion, unconditional love, selflessness, devotion and faith. Sattva is equilibrium. When sattva prevails, there is peace and tranquility. When sattva is predominant, it overpowers rajas and tamas.

Rajas is the active, vital, ever-changing, moveable principle. Rajas provides the energy *(shakti)* for creation to be perceived. We find rajas in the changeability of mind and thoughts that shift from one end of the spectrum to another without rest. Activity that is expressed as likes or dislikes, love or hatred, attraction or repulsion is rajas. It is the energy that observes and perceives with intellect. Without rajas, sattva is unmovable. Shiva lies in a tranquil, meditative, unmovable, blissful state without rajas (shakti) to force Him into action. Rajas is necessary for creation. Through rajas we experience the senses, the world, and our individuality. Rajas is both the energy that makes us continually "run around" and the energy that gives us the ability to discriminate between the eternal and non-eternal. When rajas is dominant, it overpowers sattva and tamas.

Amma has described the proper use of rajas for us. She says, "Everyone is madly running around looking for peace. Peace should come from within. What is to

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be done in order to obtain this peace? We should live our lives understanding and discriminating between the eternal and non-eternal. That is the only way. We will get peace only through the knowledge that God alone is eternal."

Tamas is inertia, darkness, confusion and *maya* (the power of illusion). Tamas is destructive in power. It is the dense matter of the universe. Tamas is that binding force that tends towards lethargy, sloth and foolish actions. It causes delusion or non-discrimination. Time and space—that which is non-eternal—are said to be ruled by tamas. Tamas is also decay and is responsible for the process of death and disease. From a balanced state, tamas is responsible for rebirth. It is the pull of the unmanifest calling us back to our original state. Tamas is the process of trees shedding their leaves in the fall. The leaves are dying and decaying in the solid earth only to provide fertilizer for new birth and rejuvenation of life in the spring time.

Ayurveda has many branches of healing methods. Among these are the practice of herbal medicine and natural body care. Ayurvedic formulas and body care products are traditionally prepared without the use of chemicals, pesticides or herbicides. Using natural products is particularly valuable in the modern age, where

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imbalance and sickness often arise due to an onslaught of chemicals and artificial ingredients.

Today, Ayurveda is at the forefront of body-mind-spirit medicines. It has spread far beyond its traditional base and is gaining attention throughout the world. Ayurveda, with its understanding of life and consciousness, has much to offer individuals, communities and our Mother Earth as a whole. The decline in harmony in the modern age has left the environment and Mother Nature in serious need of help. The planet and humanity are in a state of great imbalance. Resources are quickly diminishing, while war and sickness are constantly on the rise. Ayurveda offers a realistic and practical solution to many of these problems. By learning more about the principles of Ayurveda, using Ayurvedic products and embracing Ayurvedic health care, we can support a more harmonious Earth, healthier bodies and more positive relationships.

Ayurvedic properties of rudraksha

Rasa (Taste) – Sour
Virya (Energy) – Heating
Vipaka (Post-digestive effect) – Pungent
Guna (Quality) – Light, rough
Dosha – Decreases vata and kapha, mildly increases pitta, generally considered tridoshic

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Rudrakshas have been used in Ayurvedic medicine for thousands of years. They can be used alone or in formulations with other herbs. Rudrakshas are used as medicine both internally as well as externally. The natural energetic properties of wearing rudraksha beads have been found by Ayurvedic practitioners to improve concentration, focus and mental stamina. When worn on a mala (necklace/rosary) around the heart area, rudrakshas reduce and regulate stress levels, blood pressure and hypertension. This results in the feeling of tranquility and calmness. Rudrakshas are considered to be ideal for assisting focused meditation and other spiritual practices such as mantra japa (repetition of sacred sounds).

Modern scientific research

Rudrakshas are composed of carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, oxygen and some trace elements in combined form. The percentage composition of these gaseous elements was determined by a CHN Analyzer and by gas chromatography. These seeds consist of 50.031% carbon, 0.95% nitrogen, 17.897% hydrogen and 30.53% oxygen. Rudraksha also contains the following elements, but in lower quantities: aluminum, calcium, chlorine, copper, cobalt, nickel, iron, magnesium, manganese, phosphorus, potassium, sodium, silica and zinc.

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The shakti of rudrakshas has been recognized in Vedic culture as a spiritual phenomenon for thousands of years. A team of scientists led by Dr. Subas Roy, Ph.D., from the Institute of Technology at Banaras Hindu University in India has recently documented the value and merit of these seeds through modern scientific research. This research has proven that rudraksha emits powerful electromagnetic, paramagnetic and inductive properties that vary according to the different mukhis. They create specific electric impulses that are relayed directly to the brain through the process of reflex skin response, stimulating specific brain centers that transfer information in the neurophysiology. Wearing rudrakshas improves and balances the activity of neurotransmitters, dopamine and serotonin levels.

Studies show that wearing rudrakshas create positive changes in a person's energy field, and this may lead to improvements in physical and mental ailments. The use of Kirlian or aura photography has confirmed this observation.

A research project conducted at Banaras Hindu University has scientifically shown the powers of rudraksha with reproducible results. Scientists there have proved that rudraksha have electromagnetic, paramagnetic, diamagnetic, and dynamic polarity (the ability to change its polarity) properties. It has also

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been shown that rudrakshas have anti-aging properties based on their electromagnetism.

Dr. Roy's research confirms that the healing powers of rudraksha beads come from their electromagnetic properties. When rudraksha beads are placed over the heart, they act to stabilize the heartbeat. Similar to magnets, the beads work on the principle of Dynamic Polarity. Blood circulation and heartbeat automatically induce a magnetic field around the body, and particularly the heart region. Depending on the polarity and intensity of this induced magnetic field, rudraksha beads transmit subtle electrical and inductive impulses with opposing polarity and intensity. Accordingly, a proportionate balancing force is exerted on the heart to regulate it if it starts beating above or below normal rates. This action helps to ensure ideal blood circulation in the body.

Ayurveda expounds that rudraksha possesses preventative and curative properties for many diseases. One example is its protective ability against the unprecedented exposure to the electromagnetic frequencies (EMF's) created by cell phones and other electronic devices, as well as other detrimental effects of fast-paced lifestyles. These days, the way we eat, work, travel and commute involve high levels of stress. Rudrakshas provide a protective shield to both the physical body

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and the *koshas* or subtle body. Rudraksha beads have many other powerful properties for transforming one's personality and outlook in a positive way.

While rudraksha seeds are used as beads, the leaves, bark and outer skin of the fruit of the rudraksha tree can be used for making useful herbal products. In 1985, Dr. S.P. Gupta's research proved that consuming rudraksha powder orally can cure high blood pressure without any side effects.

Traditional rudraksha folk remedies

Blood purification and general tonic – Take one part rudraksha and six parts pure water. Crush the rudraksha. Bring the water to a rapid boil. Add the rudraksha to the boiling water and stir regularly. Cook until it reduces to one-fourth the original volume. One may add raw honey or jaggery after cooling. Drinking this tonic daily can be used to purify the blood and for general well-being.

Insomnia – Place rudrakshas under the pillow. A traditional folk remedy is to make a paste with the powder and some raw milk and place a few drops on the eyelids before going to sleep.

Piles/Hemorrhoids – For Internal Piles: Mix together 1/8 tsp. rudraksha powder, ½ tsp. triphala

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churna and ½ tsp. guggulu. Add one cup of hot water. Steep overnight and drink in the morning upon rising.

For external piles: Take 1 part rudraksha powder and 4 parts triphala and mix into a paste with raw honey. Apply topically.

Digestive system disorders (jaundice, liver disease or stomach problems) – Take equal parts rudraksha, guduchi, chitrak, devadaru, daruharidra, punarnava, bhumiamalaki and katuka. Make a tea and drink regularly.

Memory and concentration – Bring to a boil a 4- or 6-mukhi rudraksha in a cup of raw milk. Drink daily for a minimum of 1 month.

Blood pressure (to regulate) – Keep a 5-mukhi rudraksha in a glass or copper pot filled with water overnight and drink in the morning. Repeat the process during the day and drink in the evening.

High blood pressure – Take a 5-mukhi rudraksha in 3oz. pure water. Add 7 peppercorns, 7 tulasi leaves, 1 clove, and 1 cardamom pod. Let sit for five hours or overnight. Strain the herbs and consume first thing in the morning on an empty stomach. Take for a minimum of 2 months.

Brain/nerve disorders – Use a 4-mukhi rudraksha. Place it in a container with 1 L/qt. of organic raw cow's milk. Boil it for ten minutes. Remove from heat and

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let the milk cool to lukewarm temperature. Consume the rudraksha milk on an empty stomach and consume nothing else for half an hour. This should be repeated for a minimum of 21 days.

The administration of rudraksha can also be performed in any of the following ways:

Powder – Make a fine powder of rudraksha after cleaning it. This powder can be taken orally in quantities of about 300-350 milligrams per day.

Milk – To make rudraksha milk, boil a 4- or 6-mukhi rudraksha in organic raw milk for about 10 to 15 minutes. This milk can be given to anyone suffering from any mental disorder, epilepsy, loss of memory or serious depression. It can also be given for improving memory power and intelligence.

Bhasma (ash) – The rudraksha is burned slowly and repeatedly until it is incinerated into an ash. This *bhasma* can be consumed with milk, ghee or honey. A highly potentized method is to take with *madhugrita* (ghee and honey, equal parts by volume, ½ tsp. each). Classical Ayurvedic *bhasmas* are created by putting the material in clay pots, covering and then burning them using dry cow dung cakes.

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Healing properties and therapeutic use

Rudraksha seeds can simply be soaked overnight in water in a clay/earthen pot. This rudraksha water can be consumed regularly first thing in the morning on an empty stomach to help control blood pressure and mitigate heart problems.

Wearing a five-mukhi rudraksha mala is considered to be good for heart diseases. In such cases, the beads are recommended to be worn on a red thread and should touch the skin over the heart. These malas have also shown to be very effective in treating diabetes, insomnia, liver diseases, migraines and mental illness.

When wearing rudrakshas for other healing purposes, it is recommended to string them with a metal wire. The wire may be made of gold, copper, silver, or of *panchadhatu* (a combination of five metals: copper, bronze, gold, lead and silver). Rudrakshas may be worn on the wrist, arm, neck, head, ears or other parts of the body. Worn around the waist, rudrakshas help open the chakras and to regulate one's prana.

Each mukhi has its own unique healing properties as well as overall healing benefits. There are many texts describing these properties. The properties of each mukhi will be discussed in detail in the section on mukhis that follows. Below is general information

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on the healing powers of rudrakshas from Ayurvedic and yogic texts.

Rudraksha is sour and heating and therefore controls vata and kapha. It removes headaches and cures mental disorders.

– Raj-Nighantu

Rudraksha is sacred to Lord Neelkantha (Blue-Throated Shiva); therefore, it is pure and destroys demons [all evil things].

– Nepali Nighantu/Chandra Nighantu

Rudraksha is a beneficial remedy for vata and pitta type fever, for all types of stomach disorders, mental imbalance, blood pressure, liver and respiratory disorders.

– Swastha Vitta

Rudrakshas are good for curing body swellings, infection, mental disorders, insomnia, headaches, stress and for peace. They regulate blood flow and cure liver disorders. They are also extremely

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beneficial for controlling blood pressure, respiratory problems and problems of the heart.

– Dravya Guna Vigyan

The rudraksha mala worn on the body is good for blood pressure, heart diseases and mental disorders.

– Ras Yog Sagar

Rudraksha has heating quality and is good as a remedy for poison and for febrile diseases.

– Abhinava Nighantu

Rudrakshas are highly effective in the treatment of cancer, skin problems and tuberculosis; epilepsy, vata and pitta disorders, vomiting of blood, typhoid fever (the bead should be boiled in water and concentrated form of this water should be consumed) and cough (taken in powdered form with honey or a paste which can be made by rubbing the seed against a hard and clean surface, which can then be consumed).

– Vana Aushadhi Chandrodaya

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Benefits of wearing rudrakshas

1. It is accepted that one who wears a rudraksha mala on their right or left arm will not get paralytic stroke.

2. Wearing a three- or five-mukhi rudraksha mala around the waist will alleviate back pain. The mala should be touching the back portion of the body.

3. Wearing a mala made of five-mukhi or large rudraksha along with a twelve-mukhi rudraksha can control blood pressure and prevent heart disease.

4. Wearing rudraksha around the neck gives relief from ailments of the throat like tonsillitis and hoarse voice.

5. Wearing an eleven-mukhi rudraksha over the head can cure headaches, migraines, vertigo, weak memory and colds.

6. Wearing rudrakshas over the head is done by making a crown of rudrakshas with 550 beads of four-, five- and six-mukhi beads. This should be kept on the head of a person suffering from acute mental problems. This should provide a sense of calmness and well-being.

Rudrakshas for beauty care

1. To remove wrinkles and dark circles under the eyes, one can apply a rudraksha paste made in water

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along with some drops of fresh lime or lemon juice and tulasi on the affected areas.

2. To treat skin diseases, one can apply a paste made out of five-mukhi beads mixed with cow dung in pure water, over the affected areas. This can be use in treating ringworm, psoriasis, skin infection and eczema. (Note: cow dung was used in previous times when it was very pure. In the present day, the same dung may make one very sick due to industrial waste, contamination and toxicity).

3. To make a herbal facial mask, mix rudraksha and manjistha powders with honey and ghee. Rub the paste on the face. Let it sit for 20 minutes and rinse.

4. To remove wrinkles, prepare a paste with an eight-mukhi rudraksha and almond seed powder with food-grade rose water. Apply it on the face for one hour and rinse. Do not use soap afterwards. This should be repeated for several days and it will create a wonderful glow to the face and remove wrinkles.

Another method for removing wrinkles is to make a mixture of rudraksha and arjuna powders with raw honey. Make a paste and apply it to the face. Allow it to sit for an hour then rinse with pure water without using soap.

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Rudraksha to treat burns

1. Mix rudraksha powder in coconut oil and apply it to the burn.

2. Mix white sandalwood powder, guduchi and rudraksha powder in limestone water. (Make limestone water by dissolving a tablespoon of limestone in a cup of water.) Add an equal quantity of coconut oil. Apply to the burn.

Rudraksha water

Leave five rudrakshas in one liter/quart of water in a clay or copper pot for about 24 hours. Remove the rudrakshas from the water and allow them to dry for two to three hours. Next, place them back in the same water for another 24 hours. After the second 24-hour period, remove the seeds. Drink the water on daily basis. It can be used to control blood pressure and is good for heart ailments and proper circulation. The same rudrakshas can be used for one year.

Other uses

1. Headache or migraine: Place a few drops of rudraksha water in each ear.

2. External infections or wounds: Apply rudraksha water locally/topically and drink it regularly.

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3. Cold and cough: Put rudraksha water in the nose by performing *jalaneti* (ayurvedic nasal washing).

4. Eye diseases: Put a few drops of rudraksha water in the eyes or wash the eyes using an eye cup.

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Healing with different mukhis

All rudrakshas, no matter how many faces they have, possess profound healing properties.

One-mukhi rudraksha: One-mukhi rudrakshas are medicinal for diseases such as chronic asthma, heart problems, mental anxiety, tuberculosis, paralysis, stroke, eye problems, bone pain and headaches.

Two-mukhi rudraksha: Two-mukhi rudrakshas aid the treatment of diseases like impotency, renal failure, stress, anxiety, hysteria, lack of concentration, depression, negative thinking, eye problems, mental chaos and intestinal disorders.

Three-mukhi rudraksha: Three-mukhi rudrakshas are beneficial for the diseases like depression, schizophrenia, weakness, imbalances in the menstrual cycle/ menstrual stress, obsessive-compulsive disorder, blood pressure, mood swings, fever or weakness, jaundice, and mental disability.

Four-mukhi rudraksha: Four-mukhi rudrakshas help problems with blood circulation, cough, and brain functioning, as well as asthma, memory lapse and respiratory problems.

Five-mukhi rudraksha: Five-mukhi rudrakshas are beneficial in regulating blood pressure, heart problems,

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One Mukhi

Two Mukhi

Three Mukhi

Four Mukhi

Five Mukhi

Six Mukhi

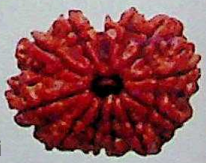
Seven Mukhi

Eight Mukhi

Nine Mukhi

Ten Mukhi

Eleven Mukhi



Twelve Mukhi

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stress, mental disability, obesity, anger management, diabetes, piles, neurotic and behavioral problems.

Six-mukhi rudraksha: Six-mukhi rudrakshas have been used to treat diseases like epilepsy, neurological disorders and gynecological problems.

Seven-mukhi rudraksha: Seven-mukhi rudrakshas support the treatment of diseases like asthma, pharyngitis, impotency, foot-related diseases and respiratory weakness.

Eight-mukhi rudraksha: Eight-mukhi rudrakshas treat disturbances such as stomachaches, stress, anxiety and skin diseases.

Nine-mukhi rudraksha: Nine-mukhi rudrakshas help to treat karma-related disorders, idiopathic diseases and difficult to cure diseases.

Ten-mukhi rudraksha: Ten-mukhi rudrakshas are useful in addressing hormonal imbalances in the body and mind, whooping cough and asthma.

Eleven-mukhi rudraksha: Eleven-mukhi rudrakshas are used for the treatment of painful diseases like body pain, backache, and headaches, as well as alcoholism, drug addiction and liver diseases.

Twelve-mukhi rudraksha: Twelve-mukhi rudrakshas are valuable for treating bone diseases like osteoporosis, and rickets, mental weakness and anxiety.

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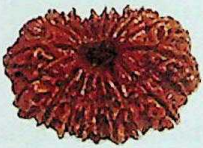
Thirteen Mukhi

Fourteen Mukhi

Fifteen Mukhi

Sixteen Mukhi

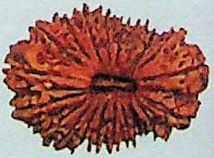


Seventeen Mukhi

Eighteen Mukhi

Nineteen Mukhi

Twenty Mukhi



Twenty One Mukhi

Gauri Shankar

Savar

Trijuti

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Thirteen-mukhi rudraksha: Thirteen-mukhi rudrakshas are used for treating diseases of muscle such as muscular dystrophy.

Fourteen-mukhi rudraksha: Fourteen-mukhi rudrakshas are beneficial in treating all diseases, particularly those that are brain-related.

Fifteen-mukhi rudraksha: Fifteen-mukhi rudrakshas are used for treating skin diseases, recurring miscarriage and stillbirth. A fifteen-mukhi rudraksha is considered as a blessing for women who are infertile and wish to conceive.

Sixteen-mukhi rudraksha: Sixteen-mukhi rudrakshas are used in treatment of diseases like leprosy, tuberculosis and all lung diseases.

Seventeen-mukhi rudraksha: Seventeen-mukhi rudrakshas are used in treating diseases related to the brain, such as memory loss and motor function disorders.

Eighteen-mukhi rudraksha: Eighteen-mukhi rudrakshas are used to prevent and cure diseases like mental instability and general debility.

Nineteen-mukhi rudraksha: Nineteen-mukhi rudrakshas are used in blood disorders and weakness of the spine.

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Twenty-mukhi rudraksha: Twenty-mukhi rudrakshas are used for eye problems, poisoning and snake bites.

Twenty–one-mukhi rudraksha: Twenty-one-mukhi rudrakshas are believed to eliminate every form of disease.

Gauri Shankar and Garb Gauri Shankar rudraksha: Gauri Shankar is used for the treatment of sexual problems, as well as behavioral disorders.

Ganesha rudraksha: Ganesha rudrakshas are considered as treatment for all types of mental disturbances.

Trijuti rudraksha: Trijuti rudrakshas are used to treat every type of disease.

Savar rudraksha: It is believed that a Savar rudraksha has the healing benefits of all other rudrakshas combined and therefore treats every disease, whether it be physical, mental, emotional or spiritual.

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Rudraksha astrology

"God is in everything, not just in human beings.
God is in mountains, rivers and trees,
in birds and animals, in clouds, the
sun, the moon and the stars."

– Amma

Rudrakshas are used in *Jyotish* (Vedic Astrology, also called Science of Light) for removing malefic planetary effects. There are twenty-seven *nakshatras*, or constellations. Each nakshatra governs one of the nine planets. Each nakshatra is governed by a different-faced rudraksha. According to the constellations, various mukhi rudrakshas are worn. It is found to be a very useful aid to spiritual practice.

The various mukhi rudrakshas, governed by specific planets, receive shakti from the respective planet. This is the same principle at work as with the use of gemstone therapy (*ratna* therapy). The tremendous receiving power of the rudraksha works like a conduit and reservoir of energy. It not only receives energy, it also emits that same energy.

Ancient scriptures associate each rudraksha with a Deva (god) or Devi (goddess). The Deva or Devi is

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said to protect the wearer from negativities and evil in all aspects of life.

Birth nakshatra	Ruling planets	Gems	Rudraksha
Ashwini	Ketu	Cat's eye	Nine-mukhi
Bharani	Venus	Diamond	Six-mukhi
Krittika	Sun	Ruby	One, 11 & 12-mukhi
Rohini	Moon	Pearl	Two-mukhi
Mrigashira	Mars	Red coral	Three-mukhi
Ardra	Rahu	Hessonite (gomed)	Eight-mukhi
Punarvasu	Jupiter	Yellow sapphire	Five-mukhi
Pushya	Saturn	Blue sapphire	Seven-mukhi
Ashlesha	Mercury	Emerald	Four-mukhi
Meagha	Ketu	Cat's eye	Nine-mukhi
Purvaphalguni	Venus	Diamond	Six-mukhi
Uttaraphalguni	Sun	Ruby	One, 11 & 12-mukhi
Hasta	Moon	Pearl	Two-mukhi
Chitra	Mars	Red coral	Three-mukhi

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Swati	Rahu	Hessonite (gomed)	Eight-mukhi
Vishakha	Jupiter	Yellow sapphire	Five-mukhi
Anuradha	Saturn	Blue sapphire	Seven-mukhi
Jyestha	Mercury	Emerald	Four-mukhi
Mula	Ketu	Cat's eye	Nine-mukhi
Purvashadha	Venus	Diamond	Six-mukhi
Uttarashadha	Sun	Ruby	One, 11 & 12-mukhi
Shravana	Moon	Pearl	Two-mukhi
Dhanishtha	Mars	Red coral	Three-mukhi
Shatabhisha	Rahu	Hessonite (gomed)	Eight-mukhi
Purvabhadrapada	Jupiter	Yellow sapphire	Five-mukhi
Uttarabhadrapada	Saturn	Blue sapphire	Seven-mukhi
Revati	Mercury	Emerald	Four- & seven-mukhi

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Sign	Birth Rasi/Lagna	Ruling planet	Rudraksha
1	Mesha (Aries)	Mercury	Three & five-mukhi
2	Vrishabha (Taurus)	Venus	Four, six & seven-mukhi
3	Mithuna (Gemini)	Mercury	Four & six-mukhi
4	Kataka (Cancer)	Moon	Two & three-mukhi
5	Simha (Leo)	Sun	One, three &12-mukhi
6	Kanya (Virgo)	Mercury	Four & six-mukhi
7	Tula (Libra)	Venus	Six & seven-mukhi
8	Vrishchika (Scorpio)	Mars	Two, three & five-mukhi
9	Dhanus (Sagittarius)	Jupiter	Five &12-mukhi
10	Makara (Capricorn)	Saturn	Six & seven-mukhi
11	Kumbha (Aquarius)	Saturn	Six & seven-mukhi
12	Mina (Pisces)	Jupiter	Three & five-mukhi

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Rudraksha mukhis (the faces of God)

Just as Nature creates the favorable circumstances
for a coconut to become a coconut tree,
and for a seed to transform itself into a huge fruit tree,
Nature creates the necessary
circumstances through which
the individual soul can reach the Supreme Being
and merge in eternal union with Him.

– Amma

One mukhi

Deity – Shiva
Ruling planet – Sun
Nakshatra – *Krittika, Uttaraphalguni, Shravana*
Gemstone – Ruby

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Mantras –Om Hreem Namah (*Shiva Purana*), Om Rudra Namah (*Padma Purana*), Om Om Drushaan Namah (*Mantra Maharnava*), Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya

Day of the week – Monday

Ruling organs – Pineal gland, pituitary gland, hypothalamus gland

Diseases – Heart, blood, veins, headache, eyes

Scriptures –

Srimaddevibhagavat (11th Skanda, Chapter V, verses 25-26):"According to Jabala, instinct for wearing rudraksha results only after attaining the perfection of Vedas and blessings of Lord Shiva during preceding births."

Srimaddevibhagavat (11th Skanda, Chapter VII, verse 23):"Rudrakshas infused with Bija mantras should be worn. One-mukhi rudraksha helps one to envision the *Partattva* (the Supreme Consciousness)."

Padma Purana (Chapter 57, verses 38-39):"The rudraksha of one face is virtually Shiva. It removes all kinds of sins. Therefore, one should wear it for the destruction of all (one's) sins. He would go to Shiva's heaven and rejoice with Shiva. O Kartikeya! A man would obtain a rudraksha of one face due to great religious merit and due to Shiva's favor and would also obtain Kailasha."

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The ek-mukhi (one-faced) rudraksha is considered to be the most auspicious of all rudrakshas. It represents the embodiment of Lord Shiva, who created the world, language, music, art, dance, and the systems of Ayurveda, yoga and Jyotish. The scriptures state that peace and pleasure will forever abide in the house where an ek-mukhi rudraksha is worshipped. There can be no fear of death. One who is blessed enough to wear a one-faced rudraksha is considered to be bestowed with divine grace. The ek-mukhi helps manifest the power of *dharana*. *Dharana* is the power of concentration on a single object. The wearer of a one-faced rudraksha starts to feel renunciation from worldly affairs and becomes naturally inclined towards Self-realization. The one who obtains an ek-mukhi and worships it obtains all the worldly pleasures but remains unaffected by them. He also attains spiritual advancement. It is considered a valuable tool for doctors as it helps to diagnose diseases and gives success in surgery.

A one-faced rudraksha should be capped in silver or gold and worn around the neck. It should also be kept in the place of meditation or chanting. For astrological purposes, it may be worn by anyone wishing to remove the malefic effects of the sun. It increases devotion and grants worldly pleasure and *moksha* (liberation).

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Two mukhi

Deity – Ardhanareeshwara
Ruling planet – Moon
Nakshatra – *Rohini, Hasta, Shravana*
Gemstone – Pearl
Mantras – Om Namah (*Shiva Purana*), Om Om Namah (*Mantra Mahranava*), Om Khum (*Padma Purana*), Om Shreem Namah (*Skanda Purana*), Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday
Ruling organs – Heart
Diseases – Acidity, gastric disorders, heart disease, stress, depression and hysteria

The two-mukhi rudraksha represents the union of Shiva and Shakti, divine consciousness and divine energy. It blesses the wearer with unity and is conducive to feeling the universal oneness in all of creation. It is said that the benefits are similar to performing

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Agni Hotra (*Vedic* fire ceremony performed at sunrise and sunset), in that it purifies the minds of negative thoughts. It should be worn by those seeking success in any relationship. It can be worn by husband and wife, parents and children or in a Guru-disciple relationship. It can be worn around the neck or kept on a statue of Shiva and Shakti.

Three mukhi

Deity – Lord Agni
Ruling planet – Mars
Nakshatra – *Chitra*, *Shatabhishak*, *Mrgashira*
Gemstone – Red coral, gomed (hessonite)
Mantras – Om Kleem Namah (*Shiva Purana*), Om Om Namah (*Padma Purana*), Om Dhum Dhum Namah (*Skanda Purana*) Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday and Tuesday
Ruling organs – Throat, solar plexus

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Diseases – Children with fever, liver and gall bladder disorders, high blood pressure, stress and depression

Scriptures –

Shiva Purana Vidyesvara Samhita– "Rudraksha is the favorite of Lord Shiva. It is highly sanctifying. It removes all sins by sight, contact and mantra japa. If one is not liberated after meditation and acquisition of knowledge (*dhyana* and *jnana*), then he shall wear rudraksha. He shall be freed from all sins and attain the highest goal. A rudraksha with three faces always bestows the means of enjoyment of the fruits of one's action."

Padma Purana– Shiva said, "The one with three mouths is the Lord of fire Himself; the sin earned in the past births of him on whom it remains is burnt as fire burns fuel. A wise man obtains that fruit which is obtained by worshipping fire or by rites of honoring fire or by offering the oblation of ghee; and attains salvation. He who wears rudraksha with three faces on his body is like Brahma on Earth. It burns all the sins due to wicked deeds collected in birth after birth. There would be not disease in his belly; he would not be sick. He is never defeated, and his house is not burnt by fire. These and all other fruits are obtained and destructive weapons are warded off. Nothing inauspicious happens due to wearing rudraksha with three mouths."

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Rudraksajabalopanisad – "The one with three faces is Fire Himself, which on wearing pleases all the three Fire deities."

The three-mukhi rudraksha represents Agni, the Lord of Fire. He is the fire that burns and consumes everything including karma and negative tendencies. The three-mukhi rudraksha also represents the three gunas—sattva (purity), rajas (activity) and tamas (inertia)—and helps to balance their effect on the mind. It is said that wearing this rudraksha helps one overcome and be victorious in any situation. For a spiritual aspirant, it helps to burn up negative tendencies and leads to ultimate freedom and peace. Astrologically, it helps to overcome malefic effects of Mars. It is useful for people with a tendency towards laziness and weakness both physically and mentally. It should be worn around the neck.

Four mukhi

Deity – Lord Brahma

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Ruling planet – Jupiter
Nakshatra – *Ashlesha*, *Jyestha*, *Revati*
Gemstone – Emerald
Mantras – Om Hreem Namah (*Shiva Purana*), Om Hreem (*Padma Purana*), Om Hreem Hoom Namah (*Skanda Purana*), Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday and Thursday
Ruling organs – Adrenal gland and heart
Diseases – Kidney, thyroid, brain, psychiatric disorders, memory
Scriptures –

The *Mahabharat* proclaims, "One who wears a rudraksha with four faces attains the level of *Dwij* (the greatest among Brahmins[the priest cast], the glow of the moon). He transforms himself into a totally new personality and assumes a new and better role in life.

A four-faced rudraksha bestows the highest attainment of the four goals of life: *artha* (wealth), *kama* (desire), *dharma* (life path) and *moksha* (liberation). Four-faced rudrakshas are blessed by Brahma, considered the creative aspect of the universe in Hinduism, and bestow the power of manifestation. They give creative wisdom and the power of positive thinking, and are excellent for artists, writers, students, teachers, intellectuals and researchers. They are also considered

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beneficial for children under the age of six to promote proper growth and health.

Five mukhi

Deity – Lord Shiva
Ruling planet – Jupiter
Nakshatra – *Punarvasu, Vishakha, Purvabhadrapada*
Gemstone – Yellow sapphire
Mantras – Om Hreem Namah (*Shiva Purana*), Om Hoom (*Padma Purana*), Om Hreem Hoom Namah (*Skanda Purana*), Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday and Thursday
Ruling organs – All chakras
Diseases – Bone marrow, immune system, liver, kidney, obesity, diabetes, feet, legs and ears

Five-mukhi rudrakshas are the most common rudraksha. Ninety-five percent of the world's rudraksha trees produce five-faced beads. These beads are said to be able to conquer all types of diseases and to provide

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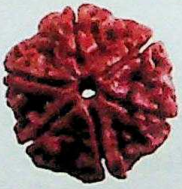
the wearer with mental peace and contentment. Scientific research has proven that these beads are beneficial for high blood pressure, stress and cardiac ailments. Five-faced rudrakshas alleviate effects from a malefic Jupiter in the astrological chart. A five-faced rudraksha rectifies the negative tendencies of the individual and conquers animalistic instincts.

Six mukhi



Deity – Ganesha and Kartikeya (Lord Shiva's sons)
Ruling planet – Venus
Nakshatra – *Purvaphalguni*, *Purvashadha*, *Bharani*
Gemstone – Diamond
Mantras – Om Hreem Hoom Namah (*Shiva Purana*), Om Hoom (*Mantra Maharanava*), Om Hreem Namah (*Skanda Purana*), Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday and Friday
Ruling organs – Root chakra and reproductive system

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Diseases – Sexual diseases and disorders, mouth diseases, neck-related disorders and dropsy

Six-mukhi rudrakshas improve artistic skills and make one excellent in speech. They increase mental power, discrimination, learning, knowledge, wisdom and will power. They are beneficial for people in the public speaking arena such as politicians and celebrities. Six-faced rudrakshas also provide stability, comfort and luxury in life. They help to overcome sins from greed and wrong use of sexual energy or misappropriation of food.

Seven mukhi

Deity – Mahalakshmi and the Sapta Matrikas (the Seven Mothers): Brahmi, Maheshwari, Kumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Chamunda
Ruling planet – Saturn
Nakshatra –*Anuradha, Uttarabhadrapada, Pushya*
Gemstone – Blue sapphire

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Mantras – Om Hun Namah (*Shiva Purana*), Om Hrah (*Padma Purana*), Om Hreem Namah (*Skanda Purana*), Om Hreem Shreem Kreem Soam, Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday and Saturday
Ruling organs – Pancreas, optic chiasma
Diseases – Sexual diseases, heart disease, throat disease, bone disease, leukemia, stress, depression and muscular pain

The seven-faced rudraksha is governed by Mahalakshmi, who bestows great abundance in life, both materially and spiritually. It attracts good health, wealth and fame, and destroys bad luck. It brings quick spiritual progress. Seven-faced rudrakshas alleviate the malefic effects of Saturn *(Shanidev)* in the astrological chart. They help to overcome death, disease, obstructions, scarcity, worry, despair, loss, impotency and delay in achievements. They are especially beneficial for people engaged in business (to gain prosperity).

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Eight mukhi

Deity – Ganesha
Ruling planet – *Rahu*
Nakshatra – *Ardra, Swati, Shatabhishak*
Gemstone – Gomed (hessonite)
Mantras – Om Hun Namah (*Shiva Purana*), Om Sah Hoom (*Padma Purana*), Om Kam Vam Namah (*Skanda Purana*), Om Hreem Shreem Kreem Soam, Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday
Ruling organs – Pancreas, optic chiasma
Diseases –Nervous system, prostrate, gall bladder, insomnia

Eight-mukhi rudrakshas are ruled by Ganesha, and therefore help to remove obstacles on the path to Self-realization. They are helpful in negating the malefic effects of Rahu in the astrological chart. Rahu's malefic effects are similar to that of *Shani* (Saturn)—sudden

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effects, diseases of lung, feet, skin, eye catarrhisis and hydrocele. Snake and spider bites are also the result of the negative effects of Rahu. One who possesses an eight-faced rudraksha keeps the malefic effects of Rahu at bay. Wearing this rudraksha brings prosperity to the family, promotes leadership qualities and gives fame and artistic abilities.

Nine mukhi

Deity – Durga
Ruling planet – Ketu
Nakshatra – *Ashwini*, *Magha*, *Mula*
Gemstone – Cat's eye
Mantras – Om Hreem Namah (*Shiva Purana*), Om Sum (*Padma Purana*), Om Hun Namah (*Mantra Maharnava*), Om Hreem Veing Yun, Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad),* Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday
Ruling organs – Hypothalamus, limbic system
Diseases – Bodily pain, backache

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Wearing a nine-faced rudraksha makes one fearless and free from tension or stress. Traditionally, it is worn capped in gold or silver and worn on a red thread. Ruled by the Great Goddess Durga, it protects her devotees and the wearer. It gives them shakti.

Ten mukhi

Deity – Vishnu
Ruling planet – No ruling planet
Nakshatra – No ruling *nakshatra*
Gemstone – No ruling gemstone
Mantras – Om Hreem Namah (*Shiva Purana*) and (*Mantra Maharnava*), Om Ksheem (*Padma Purana*), Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Sunday
Ruling organs – Heart
Diseases –Insomnia, mental instability, cough
Scriptures –
Shiva Purana Vidyesvara Samhita–

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Verse 62 - Even the devotees of Vishnu and other deities shall unhesitatingly wear the rudraksha. Especially the devotee of Rudra shall wear rudraksha always.

Verse 76 - O Mahesani, rudraksha with ten faces is Lord Janardana Himself. O Devasi, by wearing it, the devotee shall achieve the fulfillment of all desires.

Srimaddevibhagavat– Ten-mukhi rudraksha is Vishnu and removes all the tears and troubles due from planets, evil powers and snakes.

Mantramaharnava – A rudraksha with ten faces is general of an army (of noble stature) and is also Vishnu Himself. It sublimates the malefic effects of planets, evil powers and eliminates snakes. Ten-mukhi rudrakshas gives enormous power to the wearer.

A ten-faced rudraksha should be capped in gold or silver and worn around the neck. It is said to alleviate imbalances in the vata dosha. Worn to cultivate patience and tolerance, it conquers the negative effects of the nine planets in the astrology chart. It is governed by Lord Vishnu and his ten divine incarnations. It gives protection to the devotee in any direction he or she may travel.

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Eleven mukhi

Deity –Hanuman, Rudra
Ruling planet – Sun
Nakshatra – *Krittika, Uttaraphalguni, Uttarashadha*
Gemstone – Ruby
Mantras – Om Hreem Hun Namah (*Shiva Purana*), Om Shreem Namah(*Mantra Maharnava*), Om Shreem(*Padma Purana*),Om Room Moom Yoom Aum and Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Sunday and Monday
Ruling organs –Nervous system, central *nadis* (*ida, pingala, sushumna*)
Diseases –Stomach disorders, acidity, liver, breast tissue disorders

The eleven-mukhi rudraksha is governed by Lord Hanuman and bestows devotion on the wearer. It gives tremendous strength to overcome insurmountable obstacles in all endeavors. It helps to regulate blood

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pressure and conquer disease. It gives the feeling of lightness. Eleven-faced rudrakshas give one confidence, intelligence, and physical and mental power. They help one to overcome negative tendencies and fill one with virtue. Eleven-mukhi rudrakshas are also considered to be the light of Rudra, Hanuman being the eleventh form of Rudra. This aspect gives success to the devotee and dispels evil spirits. This rudraksha can be worn around the neck, kept on a *shivalingam* or in the meditation space for success in one's yoga and meditation.

Twelve mukhi

Deity – Indra, Aditya, Surya
Ruling planet – Sun
Nakshatra – *Krittika, Uttaraphalguni, Uttarashadha*
Gemstone – Ruby
Mantras – Om Kroam Kshoam Roam Namah (*Shiva Purana*), Om Hoom Hreem Namah (*Mantra*

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Maharnava), Om Hreem (*Padma Purana*), Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya

Day of the week – Sunday and Monday

Ruling organs –Cerebellum, stomach, esophagus

Diseases –Blood pressure, eyes, diabetes, intestinal disorders, heart disease, rickets and osteoporosis

Having the energy of the sun, the twelve-mukhi rudraksha helps one overcome tamas (inertia, lethargy) in the body and mind. It bestows the wearer with illumination of mind and success in meditation and mantra japa. It gives freedom from the fear of fire and disease. It gives the quality of leadership and commands respect and honor in the public arena. It helps one to develop inner strength and self-restraint. The twelve-faced rudraksha gives luster and brilliance to the skin and brightness to the eyes. Traditionally, it is capped in silver or gold and worn on a red string, close to the throat or over the heart.

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Thirteen mukhi

Deity – Kamadeva, Indra
Ruling planet – Venus
Nakshatra – None
Gemstone – Diamond
Mantras – Om Hreem Namah Namah (*Shiva Purana*), Om Kshaam Chaum Namah (*Mantra Maharnava*), Om Kshaum (*Padma Purana*),Om Kshayem Staum Namah (*Skanda Purana*) Om Aim Yaam Aap Namah and Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Sunday, Monday and Friday
Ruling organs –Cerebellum, solar plexus, prostrate, stomach, esophagus
Diseases –Sexual disorders, psychiatric disorders, muscular dystrophy

Thirteen-mukhi rudrakshas help one to overcome sins created against family members or a rishi, yogi or Guru. The wearer attains a heavenly afterlife. Ruled

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by Kamadev, the God of Love, the wearer of this bead gets blessings of luxury and beauty. Ruled by Indra, one receives the blessings of all the gods, and gets extra blessings from the Goddess Lakshmi in the form of comfort and pleasure in life. It gives material success and perfection in all endeavors. It is excellent for artists, actors, musicians, leaders, politicians and anyone seeking financial success. It fulfills all desires and gives spiritual attainment. Tradition has it worn on a red thread around the neck. Kept in the place of business, it brings great success.

Fourteen mukhi

Deity – Shiva
Ruling planet – Saturn
Nakshatra – None
Gemstone – Blue sapphire
Mantras – Om Namah (*Shiva Purana*), Om Namo Namah (*Mantra Maharnava*), Om Nraam(*Padma Purana*), Om Dum Maam Namah (*Skanda Purana*),

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Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya

Day of the week – Monday

Ruling organs –Heart

Diseases –All heart diseases, immunity, sexual weakness, mental weakness, stress, anxiety, depression, ulcers, womb, skin and eyes

Scriptures –

Srimaddevibhagavat– A man wearing a fourteen-mukhi rudraksha on his forehead himself becomes Shiva, hence its greatness is indescribable. One who wears even one bead on the forehead is always worshipped like Brahmins and gods and attains moksha.

Padma Purana– If a man always wears on his head or arm a rudraksha with fourteen mouths, the mass of Shiva's power, he is always honored and approached by gods due to the greatness of this religious merit.

Shiva Purana– A rudraksha with fourteen faces is the highest Shiva. It shall be worn on the head with great devotion.

Mantramaharnava – A rudraksha with fourteen faces is God Srikantha himself. It gives moksha to all the kith and kin of past generations and its wearer himself attains moksha.

The fourteen-mukhi rudraksha is said to have come directly from Shiva's third eye. Therefore, it helps the

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wearer to open their own third eye and grants success in meditation and mantra japa. It promotes intuition and other subtle perceptions. It helps the wearer to overcome all planetary afflictions, especially of *Sade Sati* and *Kala Sarpa Yoga.* Sade Sati is the 7½-year period of Saturn. This astrological period poses great concern by those who follow Jyotish. According to Jyotish, this period is filled with numerous challenges. The time of Sade Sati begins when Saturn enters the zodiac sign immediately before the sign of Moon at the time of the birth of the individual.

A Kala Sarpa Yoga is said to be formed when all of the planets are situated between Rahu and Ketu. It is believed in Jyotish to create malefic effects and delays. Like Sade Sati, it is also considered a very challenging period. *Kal* means "dark" and *sarpa* means "snake." Saturn afflictions and Kala Sarpa Yogas are believed to cause the most astrological difficulties; this rudraksha helps to alleviate this type of suffering.

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Fifteen mukhi

Deity – Shiva/Pashupati Nath
Ruling planet – Rahu
Nakshatra – None
Gemstone – Gomed (hessonite)
Mantras – Om Hreem Namah and Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday
Ruling organs –Lymphatic system, throat region
Diseases –General weakness, sexual weakness, immune system

Fifteen-faced rudraksha is said to be incredibly powerful for those doing sadhana or performing *tapas* (intense spiritual austerities for a specific result, literally means purification by fire). It helps to accomplish mokhsa (liberation) in this lifetime. Pashupati is the Lord of individuals and Lord of animals. Kashmir Shaivism says the individual soul, *jiva*, by nature is infinite, all pervasive and omnipresent. However, due

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to vasanas, the jivas mistakenly experience themselves as finite, limited and ignorant. The vasanas that bind individuals are called *paasha* and are three in nature: *anava, karma* and *maya*. The actual translation of paasha is "rope"—the rope that binds. This rope has three strands. These strands are anava (the impurity of ignorance), karma (the impurity of action) and maya (the power of illusion). The three ropes bind the individual soul into bondage. Anava is an initial, less positive, inert energy that causes delusion. This is the original cause of an individual's bondage. Karma results from actions of thought, word and deed. It produces either merit or demerit and seals the bondage of the individual to the cyclical wheel of birth and death. Karma can also be pacified and destroyed. Maya supplies an individual with the tools and objects of experience. It creates the universe for one's advancement, though under the influence of ignorance, it can become misused and become a severe hindrance. Maya must be overcome.

Traditional Kashmir Shaivism says that individual souls are bound (pashu) by karma from previous births. As a fifteen-mukhi rudraksha is ruled Pashupathi Nath (Shiva), it frees the jiva from these bonds. It is believed that by wearing this rudraksha, the sadhak is granted moksha from the cycle of birth and death. It helps the seeker realize the nature of the Supreme Self.

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For healing purposes, it should be worn by anyone battling with cancer or "incurable" diseases. It promotes *ojas* (immunity) and supports overall healing. It can be worn by healers, especially those working specifically with prana (life force energy). It is traditionally worn capped in silver or gold and a red thread.

Sixteen mukhi

Deity – Shiva (Mahmrityunjaya) and Lord Rama
Ruling planet – Ketu
Nakshatra – No ruling nakshatra
Gemstone – Cat's eye
Mantras –Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday
Ruling organs –Thyroid and thymus gland, spleen and pancreas
Diseases –Glandular disorders, tuberculosis, lung disorders, prana disorders

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The sixteen-mukhi rudraksha is known as *Vijaya* (great victory). It is often called Jai Rudraksha. This rudraksha is governed by Lord Shiva in his *Mahamrityunjaya* form, as the conqueror of disease and death. It is dedicated to Lord Rama for its strength and establishment in dharma (truth and righteousness). This rudraksha is regarded as giving the boon of *mahakala* (great time); it assists the devotee in overcoming the fear of death and time. It makes one fearless through wisdom. This rudraksha protects against all types of disease, especially those of karmic origins. It gives great physical stamina and protects against all weakness of body and consciousness. The rudraksha is believed to be the physical embodiment of the Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, the mantra that conquers disease, old age and death. It is recommended that this mantra be chanted daily. The sixteen-mukhi rudraksha is traditionally capped in silver or gold and worn on a red thread. It may be kept in the meditation room for success in meditation and mantra japa. It can be used as the Guru bead on a japa mala.

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Seventeen mukhi

Deity – Lord Vishwakarma (Architect of the World) and Goddess Katyayani (a form of Durga)
Ruling planet – None
Nakshatra – None
Gemstone – None
Mantras –Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday
Ruling organs –Small Intestines and lungs
Diseases –Memory, general weakness, lethargy, sexual weakness

Vishwakarma is said to have created the world and Katyayani bestows success in artha, kama, dharma and moksha. The wearer of a seventeen-mukhi rudraksha attains success in every endeavor as obstacles are removed and prosperity comes easily. According to the Puranic Tantric text *Katyayani Tantra*, wearing this gives a life partner, spiritual progeny and wealth. All

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disease is conquered and Self-realization is attained in this life.

Eighteen mukhi

Deity – Bhumi Devi (Mother Earth)
Ruling planet – Earth
Nakshatra – None
Gemstone – All
Mantras –Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Days of the week – Monday and Friday
Ruling organs –Liver
Diseases –Female reproductive weakness, mental weakness, general weakness, diabetes, arthritis and paralysis

Wearing an eighteen-mukhi rudraksha gives one the feeling of being nurtured and cared for. Mother Earth nurtures all her children and gives unconditional love. Wearing this rudraksha helps one to awaken the unconditional love sleeping deep within. It gives strength and vibrant health and helps to overcome

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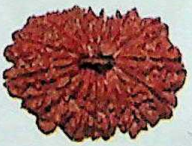
any disease caused by weakness. It is beneficial to wear when starting any new endeavors, including conceiving children. As Mother Earth is so abundant, wearing this rudraksha provides material prosperity.

Nineteen mukhi



Deity – Vishnu and Lakshmi
Ruling planet – None
Nakshatra – None
Gemstone – None
Mantras –Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday
Ruling organs –Lungs, bronchi
Diseases –Breathing disorders, blood pressure, stress and anxiety

Nineteen-mukhi rudrakshas are governed by Vishnu and His wife Lakshmi. It is believed that the wearer of these beads never lacks in anything and is filled with grace. Material gains and spiritual realization are the

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blessings of Vishnu and Lakshmi. The nineteen-mukhi rudraksha gives freedom from disease and long life. It is traditionally worn by those seeking success in business or new endeavors.

Twenty mukhi

Deity – Brahma
Ruling planet – None
Nakshatra – None
Gemstone – None
Mantras – Om Hreem Hreem Hum Hum Brahmane Namah and Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday
Ruling organs –Adrenal glands
Diseases –All types of diseases, poisoning, mental diseases due to psychic attacks

Twenty-mukhi rudrakshas give mental peace and knowledge. They bless the wearer with both worldly and spiritual wisdom. They assist in increasing one's

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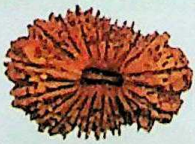
faith in the Divine and grant good health and success in life.

Twenty-one mukhi



Deity – Lord Kuber (Divine Treasurer)
Ruling planet – None
Nakshatra –None
Gemstone – None
Mantras –Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday
Ruling organs –Reproductive
Diseases –Stress, anxiety and worry

Twenty-one-mukhi rudrakshas are governed by the Lord of Wealth (Kuber). It is said that wearing this rudraksha brings all kinds of wealth and material gains. It provides comfort and good food and clothing. It is said to fulfill all material desires and helps to avoid any adversities. The one who wears this will never lack anything in their lifetime. One will be tension free and

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happy. It also bestows *bhakti* (devotion) and protects one on the path of *Sanatana Dharma* (Eternal Truth). It should be worn set in a gold cap and placed on a red thread.

Ganesha mukhi

Deity – Ganesha
Ruling planet – None
Nakshatra – None
Gemstone – None
Mantras –Mahamrityunjai Mantra (Brahajjalopanishad), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – Monday
Ruling organs –Brain
Diseases –All mental and behavioral disorders

Ganesha is known for both giving success and overcoming obstacles. In the same way, wearing a Ganesh rudraksha assists the wearer in overcoming obstacles.

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Ganesha rudraksha provides wisdom, learning, discrimination and power.

Ganesh rudraksha bears a trunk-like protrusion similar to the face of Lord Ganesha. Ganesh should be the first to be worshipped in the beginning of any auspicious occasion. Ganesh rudraksha provides the wearer perfection in every avenue of life.

Gauri Shankar mukhi

Deity – Shiva and Parvati
Ruling planet – Moon
Nakshatra – None
Gemstone – None
Mantras – Mahamrityunjai Mantra (*Brahajjalopanishad*), Om Namah Shivaya, Om Gaurishankaraya Namah
Day of the week – Monday
Ruling organs –Reproductive organs
Diseases –Reproductive disorders, behavioral disorders

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Gauri Shankar rudrakshas are very rare and expensive, as they are unique in form. This is a rudraksha in which two rudraksha beads are naturally connected. One half of the rudraksha represents the Goddess Gauri (Parvati) and the other half represents Lord Shankar (Shiva). It is regarded as one of the best things for creating an atmosphere of peace and contentment in the family. It is believed that if a man worships Gauri Shankar, all pain and suffering and other worldly obstacles are destroyed and the peace and happiness of his family is preserved.

The Gauri Shankar rudraksha is also used to expand one's consciousness. Wearing this rudraksha is said to bestow the boon of awareness. It also assists in creating harmonious relationships with relatives, co-workers and bosses. It bestows awareness of the plants and trees and all of Mother Earth, as well as the Atma. The Gauri Shankar rudraksha gives the capacity to tolerate others, and simultaneously helps to develop insight into what is lacking in our own self. It helps to realize the unifying force of connectivity between the Self and the universe.

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Garbh Gauri Shankar mukhi

Garbh Gauri rudraksha is a form of Gauri Shankar. The Garbh Gauri rudraksha is the same as a Gauri Shankar except that one seed is significantly smaller than the other. The Garbh Gauri Shankar has all the properties of the Gauri Shankar in addition to that of influencing safe, full-term childbirth. Therefore, it's traditionally recommended to be worn by expecting mothers. It is also worn to promote peaceful family life.

Trijuti mukhi

Deity – The Trinity: Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva
Ruling planet – All

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Nakshatra – None
Gemstone – None
Mantras –Mahamrityunjai Mantra (Brahajjalopanishad), Om Namah Shivaya
Day of the week – None
Ruling organs– All
Diseases –All

A Trijuti rudraksha is a seed that has three seeds naturally grown together on the tree. It is incredibly rare to find an authentic one. It is essentially a Gauri Shankar with an additional rudraksha. A Trijuti rudraksha may have any number of mukhis. There are many fakes created by cutting and joining three rudrakshas together. One should be extremely careful when purchasing a Trijuti. It should be certified by means of x-ray. An entire forest of rudraksha trees may only produce one Trijuti in several years. A Trijuti rudraksha is also known as Tribhagi, Gauri Path. It is believed that one who owns or wears this rudraksha is blessed with knowledge, confidence, divine personality, health, wealth, power and total control over the senses. This seed is believed to cure all types of internal and external diseases.

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Savar rudraksha

A Savar rudraksha is one of the rarest of all rudrakshas. It may be years on end before a single Savar rudraksha is grown naturally. A Savar is a one-faced rudraksha that is naturally attached to a normal rudraksha seed. The word *savar* in Sanskrit means "rider." The one-mukhi in this rudraksha literally rides piggyback on the other rudraksha. It looks similar to an elephant's trunk or a baby holding on to its mother. This rudraksha is a Gauri Shankar in which one bead is one mukhi. This is also considered one of the forms of a one-mukhi rudraksha. It has all the properties of a Gauri Shankar and one-mukhi rudrakshas combined. It is believed that its effects are miraculous; it bestows its wearer with spiritual progress, physical, mental and financial prosperity. Some scholars believe that this is the best rudraksha for healing incurable diseases. It is also considered one of the best rudrakshas for entering deep meditative states.

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The rudraksha mala

Rudraksha Kevalam Vapi Yatra Kutra
Mahamate Sumantrakam Va Mantren Rahitam Bhava
Varjitam Yo Va ko Va naro Bhaktya Dharyellajjayapi
Va Sarvapap Vinirmukta Samyagjnanam An Vapnuyat

Rudrakshas can be worn while chanting a mantra or without chanting, with reverence or without, with devotion or without, with shame or without the shame; with whatsoever procedure, one who wears rudraksha gets rid of all kinds of sins and gets knowledge as well.

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When one is given a mantra by a Guru, a vital part of one's spiritual practice becomes the repetition of this mantra. The rudraksha is an important reminder that through the mantra we strive to open the inner eye of perception. About mantra japa, Amma says:

"When a Mahatma gives you a mantra, their sankalpa [divine resolve/blessing] is involved. Their divine power enters into the disciple. A mantra will carry you to the threshold of God-realization. From there you can easily reach the goal. For purifying the mind, there is no better way than chanting the Divine Names. If you remember God and chant your mantra, you will achieve tranquility very quickly. Mental purity will come through constant chanting. Your mind will get the power to face any situation. Chanting your mantra will protect you from all dangers, like armor. The ultimate goal of life is Self-realization. Knowing this, we should try to understand the transitory nature of the world. Then, with strong faith, determination, and full concentration, we should chant the mantra during every moment possible. Whenever we are not uttering God's name, we are getting closer to death. Uttering anything else other than God's name is an invitation to death. Chant your mantra always, even while taking

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a bath or sitting on the toilet. There are people who attained the goal merely by chanting a mantra."

As a beginner on the spiritual path, the Guru or Spiritual Master will guide us. As we grow spiritually, the Guru may place increasingly more challenging demands on us. Similarly, a small sapling not yet capable of providing even a little shade may one day become a large tree that provides coolness and shade for all. That potency is latent within the seed, represented in the rudraksha. Through the Guru's grace, spiritual aspirants have the opportunity to become like a large tree, ultimately merging with the Master and providing light to the whole world.

"The period of sadhana is like climbing a high mountain. You need a lot of strength and energy. Mountain climbers use a rope to pull themselves up. For you, the only rope is japa. Therefore, children, try to repeat your mantra constantly. Once you reach the peak, you can relax and rest forever."

– Amma

The *Devi Bhagawat Purana* describes the different types of malas that should be used for mantra japa. It says the number of beads per japa mala should be 27, 54 or 108, plus the Guru bead *(sumeru)*. These numbers have

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very significant meanings. Twenty-seven represents the number of nakshatras (star constellations). Each of the 27 nakshatras has four quadrants, 27 times four equals 108. These constellations are divided into twelve parts, the twelve signs of the zodiac. There are nine planets. Twelve times nine equals 108. It is believed that a mala containing 108 beads helps to unify the jiva with the Atman.

Additionally, there are many different sizes of rudrakshas that may be used for chanting. They range from 3 mm up to 12 mm in circumference. Most rudrakshas are of the Ravadar variety (meaning thorny). The smoothest, best quality rudrakshas are grown in Indonesia and are known as the Chikna variety. They are considered the most auspicious of all rudrakshas. These superfine, smooth rudrakshas are considered the best for wearing and for doing mantra japa. The chikna rudrakshas are naturally stronger than other larger size rudrakshas. They do not decay and are said to have a lifespan of hundreds of years. They are usually very expensive, the smaller the size of the seeds, the higher the price. Most people will not be able to tell the difference between these high quality rudrakshas and normal ones, and may wonder why they are so much more expensive, but an expert can point out the smoothness and more uniformity of the beads and

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will appreciate the difference in quality. A rudraksha mala may include precious and semi-precious stones depending on the person's astrological chart.

Siddha mala

A Siddha Mala is a combination of one- to 14-mukhi rudrakshas with a Gauri Shankar and a Ganesha rudraksha. According to the *PadmaPurana* and *Shiva Purana* this is the most auspicious of all malas to wear. It is believed to grant attainment of *mantra siddhi*, spiritual power through mantra. A Siddha Mala is said to assist in achieving total health, harmony and prosperity of body, mind and spirit. It is said to provide

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Self-empowerment and blessings for one's life. This mala can be strung in gold, silver, panchdhatu, red thread or wool.

A Siddha Mala can be worn during worship or meditation. It is commonly accepted that the Siddha Mala pleases all the planets, gods and goddesses. Siddha Mala has very powerful energy and the wearer gets the healing benefits of all the different rudrakshas. It is said to balance the chakras and koshas. The Siddha Mala is worn for the success of artha, kama, dharma and moksha.

It can be worn after being blessed by a saint, shivalingam or washed in a holy river such as the Ganges or Yamuna. It is said the best day to start wearing is on Monday or any other astrologically auspicious day. It should be worn against the body, touching the skin.

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Indra mala

An *Indra Mala* has one- to 21-mukhi rudrakshas. This is the rarest mala combination, as there are very few authentic rudrakshas over 14 mukhis. In addition to the 21-mukhi rudraksha, the Indra Mala has one Trijuti, one Gauri Shankar and one Savar rudraksha. It is believed that the owner or wearer of an Indra Mala is empowered with an abundance of prana, *tejas* (light of awareness) and ojas. Furthermore, it is believed that the one who wears an Indra Mala is blessed by Lord Shiva himself in such a way that the person can overcome any obstacle and will gain complete success and peace in this life. In the past, such a mala was only in the possession of great devotees of Lord Shiva, kings and queens, royal families and extremely successful,

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rich people. Only a few blessed people in this world possess a genuine Indra Mala. A survey taken in 1989 revealed that only five people in the whole world had a certified authentic Indra Mala.

The ancient scriptures state that the Indra Mala represents the pinnacle of success materially and spiritually. It gives all worldly pleasures, happiness and luxury, as well as the ability to overcome every type of adversity and the negative aspects of life. The wearer finds success in all spheres of creation. Indra Mala is said to protect the family in which it resides and is usually passed down through the generations. To possess an Indra Mala is like having a magical divine light, which will illuminate the path in times of darkness. Ancient texts say that possessing this mala is like having the entire universe contained within you.

Lord Indra, the king of the gods, governs over thunder, lightning and rain, which he uses to destroy negative forces. Indra is personified as having divine strength and bestows blessings on every aspect of life. In the *Shiva Purana,* it is said, "If a yogi is not liberated after meditation and acquisition of knowledge, he shall wear rudaksha. He shall be freed from all sins and attain the highest goal." By wearing Indra Mala, one is receiving the blessings of all the deities contained in the rudrakshas that make an Indra Mala.

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How to use rudraksha mala for mantra japa

"The mantra should be chanted with great attention. Focus either on the sound of the mantra or on the meaning; or you can visualize each syllable of the mantra as you chant. You can also visualize the form of your beloved deity while chanting. Decide the total number of times you will chant the mantra each day. This will help you to do japa with determination. But do not chant heedlessly, just to reach a certain target number. The most important thing is that your mind is one-pointed. Using a mala will help you to count and also to maintain your concentration."

– Amma

One should sit in a comfortable position with the spine straight and the eyes closed and mind focused on the mantra. The most common method of using the japa mala is hanging the mala on the middle finger and using the thumb to rotate and advance the beads. The beads are rotated one by one towards oneself, with each breath and repetition of the mantra. The index and small fingers are considered inauspicious for doing japa. The mala should never touch the ground while doing japa. The sumeru (Guru bead) should never be crossed while chanting; once the sumeru is reached,

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japa is continued in the reverse direction. While chanting, the hand can be placed in front of the heart center or on the right knee. The left hand should rest comfortably. It may hold *chinmudra* or *jnanamudra* (yogic hand positions) if desired.

Usually a rosary of 108 beads plus one Guru bead are used for this purpose, but one may also use a mala of 27 plus one or 54 plus one. Take care that your mantra repetitions should be 108 times or in multiples of 108.

Wearing rudrakshas

"The desire for wearing rudraksha is the result of attaining the perfection of knowledge and blessings of God during previous births."

– Padma Purana

Wearing rudraksha beads reminds us to awaken the light within, and this is why they are traditionally worn on a mala close to the heart.

Before wearing a rudraksha, some form of *prana pratistha* should be performed. This is the infusion of prana, vital life force into the rudraksha. Prana pratistha is the Vedic term for a rite or ceremony by which a deity is infused or brought to inhabit a *murti* (icon) of that deity. In this case, it is the rudraksha itself. Touching it to Amma, or having Amma bless it or put

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it on you is most auspicious. Traditional offerings of incense or *arati* with ghee or camphor on the day of the week that governs your rudraksha may be made regularly. In order to achieve the complete benefit of a rudraksha, one should wear a mala at all times. If it becomes necessary to take the mala off, keep it near you. For example, when you take a shower or go to sleep at night it can be kept on a night stand or on the puja table.

The *Puranas* state that, to acquire special *siddhis* (spiritual powers), rudrakshas are to be worn in different numbers on different parts of the body, like the head, neck, wrists, forearms, waist and abdomen. The number of beads used is very important when wearing malas on different parts of the body. According to various *Shastras* and *Puranas,* a rudraksha mala can be worn as a round crown, earring, chain around the ear, armband or around the stomach. One can wear one bead on the crest, three hundred around the head, thirty-six around the neck, eighteen around each arm, nine on each wrist, 108 or 54 on the chest and 504 around the stomach. One can also wear rudraksha malas of two, three, five, seven and thirty-two beads around the neck, one in each earlobe, six around each ear and one on the forehead.

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Rudraksha in the scriptures

Shiva Mahapurana

Mlechkhho Vapi chandalo Yukto Va sarvapatakai,
Rudraksha Dharayedyastu Sa Rudra Natra sanshaya

Those men who are Mlechchhas and Chandalas (impious, inhumane untouchables) and those who are full of all kinds of vices, even they will attain to the state of Lord Rudra by wearing rudraksha and meditating on it. There is no doubt about it.

Dhyan dharan Henoapi Rudraksham
Dharaya Budhah,
Sarvapap Vinirmukto sa yati Paramam gatim

A man with meditation and perseverance and a wise man who wears rudraksha gets rid of all the sins accumulated and attains the supreme goal of the human life.

Vidyesvara Samhita

Panchadevapriyashchaiva sarvadevapriyastatha |
Sarvamantranjapedbhakto
Rudrakshamalaya priye || 61 ||

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Shiva told Parvati, "My love, any God can be worshipped with the rudraksha which is dear to the five gods (Panchayatan meaning Ganesha, Surya, Devi, Vishnu and Shiva) as well as other gods."

Vishnavadidevabhaktashcha
dharayeyurna samshayaha |
Rudrabhakto visheshena
Rudrakshandharayetsada || 62 ||

Devotees of Vishnu and other gods can also wear rudraksha; there is no doubt about it. Devotees of Shiva especially have to wear rudraksha daily.

Rudraksha vividhaha protastesham
bhedanvadamyaham |
Shrinu parvati sadbhaktya
bhuktimuktifalapradan || 63 ||

Hey Parvati, rudrakshas are of different types. They provide salvation. I will tell you the secrets of them. You listen carefully.

Ekavaktrah shivah sakshadbhuktimuktifalapradah |
Tasya darshanamatrena brahmahatyam
vyapohati || 64 ||

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Single-faced rudraksha is Shiva himself, which provides the fruits of salvation and liberation. Even a glimpse will rectify brahma-hatya [the act of killing a Brahmin, considered the worst sin].

Yatra sampujitastatra laxmirdurtara nahi |
Nashyantyupadravah sarve sarvakama
bhavanti hi || 65 ||

Wherever rudraksha is worshipped,
Lakshmi is never far,
peace will overcome tremors and
all wishes will be fulfilled.

Dvivaktro devadeveshah sarvakamafalapradah |
Visheshatah sa Rudraksho govadham
nashayeddrutam || 66 ||

Two-faced rudraksha fulfills one's wishes.
This is the form of Devdeveshwar.
It immediately purifies the sin of killing a cow.

Trivaktro yo hi rudrakshah sakshatsadhanadah sada |
Tatprabhavadbhaveyurvai vidhyah
sarvah pratishthitah || 67 ||

Three-faced rudraksha directly
delivers the fruits of sadhana.

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All education is distinguished by its effect.

Charturvaktrah svayam brahma
narahatyam vyapohati |
Darshanatsparshanatsadyaschaturvargafalapradah
|| 68 ||

Four-faced rudraksha is the form of Lord Brahma. It eliminates the sin of human killing. Its darshan (glimpse) delivers the fruits of religion, wealth, sex and moksha.

Panchavaktrah svayam rudrah kala-
agnir namatah prabhu |
Sarvamuktipradashchaiva
sarvakamafalapradah || 69 ||

Five-faced rudraksha is the form of Lord Kala-agni Rudra. This rudraksha delivers all liberation and fulfills all wishes.

Agamyagamanam papamabhakshayasya
cha bhakshanam |
Ityadisarvapapani panchavaktro vyapohati || 70 ||

Sins arising from adultery and consuming uneatable foods are rinsed by five-faced rudraksha.

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Shadvaktrah kartikeyastu dharanaddakshine bhuje |
Brahmahatyadikai: papairmuchyate
natra samshayah || 71 ||

Six-faced rudraksha is the form of Lord Kartikeya.
This has to be worn on the right hand.
There is no doubt that it rinses
the sin of Brahma-hatya.

Saptavaktro maheshani hyanango nama namatah |
Dharanattasya deveshi daridropishvaro bhawet || 72 ||

Hey Parvati, the seven-faced rudraksha
is the form of Ananga.
Wearing this makes one a God out of pauper.

Rudrakshaschastavaktrashcha
vasumurtishcha bhairava |
Dharanattasya purnayurmrito
bhavati shulabhrit || 73 ||

Eight-faced rudraksha is the form of Asthamurthi
Bhairav. Attiring this rudraksha delivers
complete life span and even after death one
attains to the form of Trishuldhari Shiva.

Bhairavo navavaktrashcha
kapilashcha munih smritah |

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Durga va tadadhishthatrinavarupamaheshvari || 74 ||

Rudraksha with nine faces is said to be the form of Bhairav and Kapilamuni. Its Adhisthatri deity is Goddess Durga, the Devi who takes nine forms.

Tam dharayedwamahaste rudraksham bhaktitatparah |
Sarveshvaro bhawenunam mama
tulyo na samshayah || 75 ||

This nine-faced rudraksha is to be worn with respect on the left hand. There is no doubt the person who wears it will become almighty and of my [Shiva's] level.

Dashavaktro maheshani svayam devo janardanah |
Dharanattasya deveshi sarvankamanavapnuyat || 76 ||

Hey Maheshwari, the ten-faced rudraksha is the form of Lord Janardan himself. It completes all works.

Ekadashamukho yastu rudrakshah parmeshvari |
Sa rudro dharanattasya sarvatra vijayi bhavet || 77 ||

Hey Parameshwari, the eleven-faced rudraksha is the form of Rudra. A male attiring it will attain the qualities of Rudra and gain victory on all.

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Dvadashasyam tu rudraksham dharayetkeshadeshake |
Adityashchiva te sarve dvadashaiva sthitastatha || 78 ||

Twelve-faced rudraksha is equivalent to dwadasa-aditya, the twelve forms of the Sungod Surya. This rudraksha is to be worn on the hair.

Trayodashamukho vishvedevastaddharanannarah |
Sarvankamanavapnoti saubhagyam
mangalam labhet || 79 ||

Thirteen-faced rudraksha is the form of Vishvedeva. A person who attires this rudraksha will have all wishes fulfilled and gain good fortune and luck.

Chaturdashamukho yo hi rudrakshah paramah shivah |
Dharayenmurghina tam bhaktya
sarvapapam pranasyati || 80 ||

Fourteen-faced rudraksha is the form of great Shiva. It should respectfully be worn on the head, which will cleanse all sins.

Eti rudrakshabheda hi proktta vai mukhabhedatah |
Tattanmantraanchhrinu pritya krama
achchhaileshvara atmaje || 81 ||

Hey Parvati, daughter of Giriraj, I have described the secrets of fourteen rudraksha.

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Now listen to the mantras of the fourteen rudraksha respectively: (1) Om hrim namah, (2) Om namah, (3) Om klim namah, (4) Om hrim namah, (5) Om hrim namah,(6) Om hrim hum namah, (7) Om hum namah,(8) Om hum namah, (9) Om hrim hum namah,(10) Om hrim namah, (11) Om hrim hum namah,(12) Om kraum kshaum raum namah,(13) Om hrim namah, (14) Om namah

Bhaktishraddha yutashchaiva sarvakamarthasiddhaye
|Rudrakshandharayenmantrairdevanalasya
varjitah || *82* ||

Leaving behind sleep and laziness, one-faced to fourteen-faced rudraksha should be attired with the aforementioned mantras with devotion to fulfill wishes and gain wealth.

Vina mantrena yo dhatterudrakshambhuvimanavah |
Sayatinarakamghoramyavadindrashchaturdasha || *83* ||

Any person who wears the rudraksha without mantra in this earth will go to hell for 14 tenures of Indra or one Kalpa [aeon].

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Rudrakshamalinam dristva bhootpretpishachakah |
Dakini shakini chaiva ye chanye dhrohakaraka || 84 ||

Ghosts, evil spirits, witches and the like flee
from the person wearing a rudraksha.

Kritimanchaiva yatkichidabhicharadikancha yat |
Tatsarvam durato yati dristva
shankitavigraham || 85 ||

Such demons and other artificial thoughts and
deeds will also be afraid and stay at bay.

Rudrakshaamalinam dristva shivo vishnu: prasidati |
Devi ganapatih suryah surashchanyepi parvati || 86 ||

Oh Parvati, Lords Shiva, Vishnu, Devi,
Ganesh, Surya and other gods also
will be pleased to see a person
who wears a rudraksha.

Awam gyatva tu mahatmyam
rudrakshasya maheshvari |
Samyagdharyah samantrashcha bhaktya
dharmavivriddhaye || 87 ||

Oh Maheshwari, knowing the
importance of the rudraksha,

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it should be worn methodically with devotion and mantras for the extension of religion.

Ityukttamgirijagre hi shivenaparamatmana |
Bhasmarudrakshaamahatmyam
bhuktimuktifalapradam || 88 ||

Likewise, the almighty Lord Shiva himself explained the greatness of the bhasma [sacred ash made from burnt cow dung] and rudraksha to Parvati.

Shivasyatipriyau gyeyau bhasmarudrakshaadharinau |
Taddhamaprabhavaddhi bhuktirmuktirna
samshaya || 89 ||

It has to be known that the person who wears bhasma and rudraksha is very dear to Lord Shiva.

Bhasmarudrakshaadhari yah shivabhaktah sa uchyate |
Panchaksharam japasaktah
paripurnashcha sanmukhe || 90 ||

There is no doubt that wearing bhasma and rudraksha delivers liberation!

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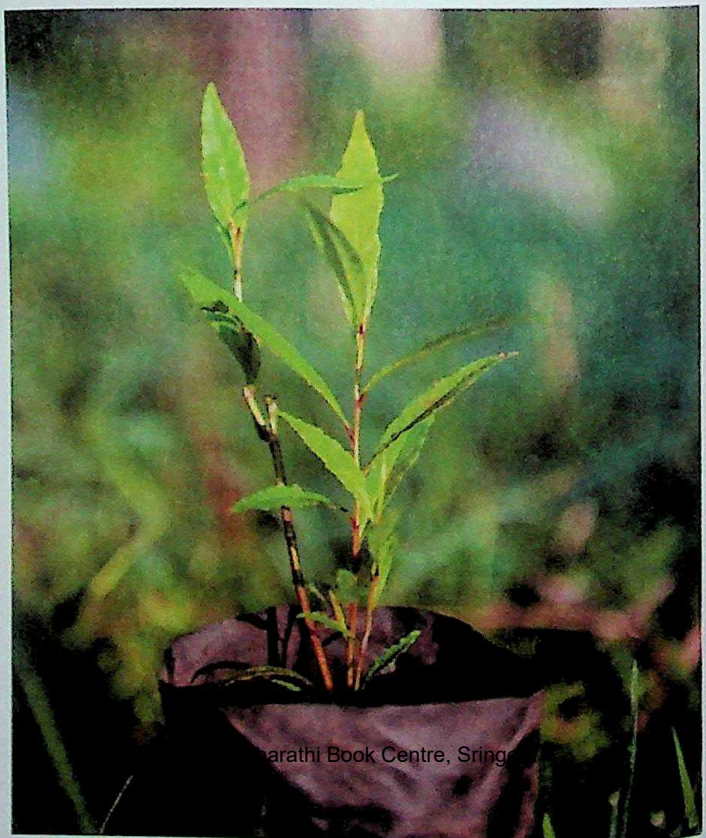
Growing rudraksha

He that plants a tree is a servant of God,
he provides a kindness for many generations,
and faces that he hath not seen shall bless him.

– Henry Van Dyke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Rudrakshas are most successfully grown in tropical and subtropical climate conditions. However, with great love and care, they can also be grown in colder climates. During the first few years when the plant is a small sapling, it requires very special care with daily watering, protection from the cold, direct sunlight and insects.

In addition to special climatic conditions, successful growing of rudraksha trees depends mainly on the quality of the soil and care during the first few months of sprouting the seeds. Due to its evergreen nature, it cools the ground surrounding the area of growth. Cultivating rudrakshas requires patience and persistence, as the seeds can take a long time to sprout. Depending on the moisture content of the soil, it can take up to one to two years for a tree to germinate. As rudrakshas are native to a subtropical climate, they grow best with a temperature range of 25-30 centigrade or 65-85 Fahrenheit. Rudraksha trees can be grown by sprouting the seeds in soil or by planting a small sapling directly into the earth. Be aware that not all seeds will sprout, so it is best to plant as many as possible.

The most common causes of rudrakshas not sprouting are either the quality of the seed or planting too deeply. Another common mistake is either over-watering or under-watering. These seeds need a balanced supply of moisture and air in the soil around

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them. Furthermore, they only germinate within certain temperature ranges.

One sprouting method is to put down a square yard of plastic sheeting (such as a thin tarp) in a warm, shady place that won't get stepped on. Ideally, the seeds should be planted indoors if sprouting in winter and outdoors if planted in spring. Put down an inch of soil on the plastic. Sprinkle the rudraksha seeds on the soil and cover with another layer of soil at least a half-inch deep. The soil must be kept moist.

When the sapling is about three inches high, it can be carefully lifted. Make sure to include the seed from which it has sprouted when lifting it out of the soil by holding the stem just beneath the leaves. Be careful not to injure the roots in this process, as the soil will give way easily when the sapling is transplanted. The sapling can be re-potted in a container at least a half-gallon in size. If rudrakshas are being grown in a warm climate or in one of their native habitats, they can be transplanted when they are eight to ten inches tall. If grown in a cooler climate, it is best to allow the saplings to grow under protection for an additional two to three years before transplanting directly into the earth.

During the first two to three years, take care that the roots don't become bound from using a pot that is too small. If they do get root bound, make sure that

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the trees recover before planting. The saplings are ready for planting when they are approximately two feet tall. Never give up on a sapling! Even if you have forgotten to water and the leaves have fallen off, the sapling may still recover and grow new leaves if you provide sufficient care and water again.

When it is time to plant the rudraksha trees, make sure they have a 30 foot x 30 foot square plot allocated for the tree to grow. A fully mature tree will grow to be thirty to ninety feet tall. The roots will be growing out of the ground around the base of the tree. After five to seven years of growth, young rudraksha trees will start to produce rudraksha fruits and seeds. One tree may produce seeds with a variety of different mukhis.

Rudrakshas harvested January 2013 from trees planted at Amritapuri (Amma's Ashram in Kerala, India)

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Life becomes fulfilled when humankind and Nature move together, hand in hand in harmony.

– Amma

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Buying rudraksha beads

Nowadays, there are many imitation rudrakshas so one must be very careful in choosing authentic beads from a reliable source. Counterfeit rudrakshas are being manufactured and sold in India and abroad. Rare rudrakshas, such as the Ekmukhi (one-faced rudraksha) are being sold as authentic when, in fact, they are not. They are being sold from as little as $100 up to $50,000.

These fake rudrakshas can be hand carved out of lotus seeds, betel nut, nutmeg, plain wood or plaster castings. Fake beads can also be made by gluing together several sections of smaller rudrakshas. Further adulterations to rudrakshas include taking a genuine rudraksha with a lower number of mukhis and carving additional faces into it. For example, taking an eight-mukhi and carving six extra "faces" into it would make the rudraksha appear to be a fourteen-faced rudraksha, making it substantially more valuable.

Sanding and gluing two or three rudrakshas together can form fake Gauri Shankar or Ganesha rudrakshas. Many of these imitation beads can be identified upon close examination by someone with in-depth experience and knowledge of rudrakshas.

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There are numerous ways of testing the authenticity of a rudraksha. Several of these methods are debatable and should not be considered as conclusive. There are several conclusive methods of testing. One way to test for authenticity is to X-ray the seed. The number of compartments inside should match the mukhi on the outside. Conducting a CT scan is equally as effective. Cutting the rudraksha in half and determining if the seeds match the mukhi is also a sure test but then the rudraksha is no longer useful except for planting. When purchasing a rudraksha, the buyer must research and have full confidence that what they are buying is genuine. Buying from an authorized dealer that provides certification of authenticity is also advisable.

When buying a rudraksha there may be a variation of colors available. This is due to a dyeing process. In the olden days natural plants and dyes such as saffron, turmeric, yellow mustard powder, kumkum and ashwagandha were used to preserve the rudraksha from ants or decay. Additionally, oils were applied such as mustard oil, jatamansi oil and sandalwood oil for further darkening of the beads. While these methods are still used today, some traders use synthetic dyes and oils. In any case, to prevent staining of one's clothes the rudraksha mala or individual beads should be washed prior to wearing. Through wearing the beads next to

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the skin they will naturally darken on their own. It is advisable if the rudrakshas become dry to apply a natural oil to freshen them.

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A rudraksha story

By Lola Sipowicz

My rudraksha story begins in the spring of 2004, during Amma's biennial tour to Australia. It was my first year to do seva at Amma's GreenFriends table – an environmental initiative inspired by Amma's message of love, respect and care for Mother Nature.

I was at the GreenFriends table, when suddenly, five, beautiful young rudraksha trees arrived. The person delivering the trees also brought a message that Amma wanted to have the young saplings brought back to Her ashram in India.

Amma had given various potted plants to me before, asking that they be brought back to Amritapuri. All of these plants had been small ones, and very often their fate in the intense climate of South India proved all but favorable. Even so, I would faithfully follow Amma's instructions to carry plants back to Kerala. I often pondered on what the deeper significance of bringing them to the ashram meant.

I began to think of how I would manage to bring the rudraksha trees to India and where they would be planted. At that very moment, a lovely, friendly

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gentleman came up to me and said he was the one who had given these rudraksha trees to Amma.

His name was Richard. He was so excited to hear that Amma had asked that the trees be brought to India. He began to tell me that when he had been to South India many years before, he felt that the climate there must be perfect for rudraksha trees to grow. I listened intently, but thought to myself that this seemed a little strange. I had learned that rudraksha trees grow in the Himalayas, so to imagine them growing in the tropics of southern India seemed impossible. *How could they survive?* I wondered. I did not want to share this thought with him since he seemed so excited about the prospect of growing these trees at the ashram. He even began to tell me exactly where he thought the trees would grow best. I just nodded my head and tried to share in his enthusiasm; inside, I was still struggling to figure out how I would bring these trees back with me to India.

Well, the journey didn't end there. Richard wanted to take me to a rudraksha forest, to show me where these special trees had come from. I went to ask Amma for permission to go with him and a few others who were keen to see where these sacred trees originated. Amma smiled and said that we should go. I had no idea what this journey would bring. A rudraksha forest

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– what would it look like? I had no concept of what to expect. I just went with the flow.

The next day, we piled into his small car and started driving toward a mountain sacred to the aboriginal people of Australia. Richard told us many wonderful things about rudraksha trees. He explained that in ancient times, when the continents were joined, India and Australia were actually right next to each other. The rudraksha tree has grown both in Australia and in India since that period. The aboriginal people used to make a delicious jam out of the blue fruit of the rudraksha. He also told us that for thousands of years rudraksha seeds had been used as prayer beads and jewelry in ancient cultures around the world.

I was getting a whole lesson on this sacred tree, and the more he told us about it, the more I could feel Amma's grace guiding us to learn. What really touched my heart was the story he told of how the tree came into existence. It was out of Lord Shiva's tears of compassion that this holy tree sprouted. Shiva's tears of compassion for the suffering of humanity – wow, I thought, this is certainly a divine tree.

I soon would fall absolutely in love with this tree, and now I've grown to worship and love it as if it were my beloved Amma.

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I have loved trees ever since I was a child. I had a favorite tree in our backyard that I would pray to. Amma says that God is Nature in the physical form. Amma was somehow tapping into this deep connection I had to trees to bring out my devotion to Her through Nature. In that moment, I felt so happy and grateful to be going to such a sacred grove of trees.

The weather was changing as we started to drive up the mountain. Soft rain began to fall, and a rainbow illuminated the horizon. I felt Amma's presence so deeply. We were going deeper and deeper into the forest, when suddenly we turned off the road into a driveway. We got out of the car and looked up. There they were – rudraksha trees growing everywhere, standing tall, strong and beautiful.

By the smaller saplings stood an old, old woman. *Who was this woman?* I thought. She looked at us and smiled. She had white hair and was bent over, in humility, caring for baby rudraksha trees.

"I love these trees," she said. "I spend my life planting them. I don't know why, I just do it." We discovered that she had no idea about the sacred legends of the rudraksha trees; she simply planted them out of love.

Richard had told her about Amma. "I would love to come and meet Amma! I am so happy that she wants these trees to be planted in India. Please take some

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more of these trees for her, so that she can bring them to India," she said eagerly.

She showed us around. There was a rushing river running through her backyard, with many rudrakshas standing on the banks. "They like the water," she said. "The seeds fall from the trees and they go down the river. The water sends them somewhere and they sprout and grow." I was deeply moved to see her dedication to this sacred tree.

As we were walking, we noticed that the whole ground was covered with rudraksha seeds. They were everywhere! We began to collect them, trying to find some nice ones for making malas. We had such a joyous time there under those trees.

It was getting late and so we had to say goodbye to the forest and the old woman – but I knew the forest was coming with us and Amma would be so happy to have the trees and the seeds.

We returned to the ashram that year with thirteen baby rudraksha trees. We planted them in clay pots, allowing them to grow slowly while we looked for their permanent home. The 2004 Asian tsunami hit the coast of southern India later that year, devastating the remote coastal fishing village that surrounds the ashram. The ashram, only a five-minute walk from the Arabian Sea, was flooded with rapidly rising water. All

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the people rushed to the higher floors of the temple and other buildings for safety. A few of us thought of the helpless rudrakshas, sitting in pots filled with ocean water. We rushed to try to save the young trees. We carried the heavy pots, one by one, up the narrow steps to Amma's room, and placed them by Her door. This happened to be the closest, safe place where we could keep them.

After things settled down from the wake of the tsunami and the trees were growing too big for their pots, I asked Amma where She would like them to be planted. To my surprise, She told me that She wanted them planted right outside Her room.

I thought to myself, *How are we going to fit all of these trees here, it is such a small space*? Somehow, we managed to fit five lucky trees there. Once, I heard that Amma had gone out to check on them during the night. She called them *Her* rudraksha trees.

Around this time, someone from Hawaii brought hundreds of rudraksha seeds and offered them to Amma. Amma was delighted! The seeds came from a rudraksha forest on the Hawaiian island of Kauai, with a tropical climate similar to that of the ashram. Amma asked me to plant the seeds. At this point, I had no idea how to sprout rudraksha seeds, so I tried to contact Richard to find out. He told me to simply

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plant them in soil – not too deep – and to keep them very moist. He assured me that surely they would grow, but I would have to wait patiently, as it could take up to six months for them to sprout.

So I did exactly what he told me to do. And I waited and waited. Nothing came up until we were on tour in Australia the following year. Suddenly, in the middle of a Devi Bhava program, I received a message from my friend that they had sprouted! I went and told Amma immediately. She smiled knowingly. I felt that it was only by Her grace that the rudrakshas had sprouted.

When I came back from that tour, I went running to see the little rudraksha seedlings. Sure enough, little green sprouts were popping out of the five-face seeds. Sometimes five sprouts bursting out of a single seed! They were so adorable! I brought them to Amma and asked Her where She wanted these new rudraksha saplings to be planted. Amma said that She wanted them everywhere! She wanted a border of rudraksha trees all around the ashram.

Well, at this point, I probably had two hundred baby rudraksha trees – and a huge project ahead of me. I was a beginner at this and had no idea how to proceed, but I prayed to Amma and began the journey of planting the sacred trees. It was the hot season, which was actually not the right season to plant trees (which,

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only by experience, I realized later). Many people were also excited to help plant these trees, and soon we were planting them in any space we could find.

Since the weather was so hot and there was no rain, we had to carry water in buckets for the young saplings. Rudraksha trees just love water – they need tons of it! I realized later that it is much wiser to grow them during the rainy season. But somehow, with Amma's grace, they grew and grew and grew! And as they were growing, the love I had for them grew as well.

Some of us had planted a few of the trees in a certain area of the ashram near Amma's parents' home. When Amma's father died, a special ceremony was performed right there, under those rudraksha trees! Amma said that during the ceremony, She kept looking up at trees, making sure that the ceremonial fire didn't hurt them.

Around this time, I noticed that one of the original rudraksha trees from Australia was not doing well. It had been planted the year before and was growing in a spiral shaped garden. I was sad to see that its leaves were falling. So, I decided to take some of Amma's bhasma and put it on the tree. Literally, within a few days, the tree was back to normal and full of life. I told Amma this story and She said it was my faith that had healed the tree, not the vibhuti. I thought this was

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so interesting, and strange. I began to think about it deeply. *How could my faith heal a tree?* I thought. I had no idea; I was only happy that the tree was safe.

That next year, I was on tour again with Amma and we were in San Ramon, California. Suddenly, I received a phone call saying that someone wanted to move the rudraksha trees from the side of Amma's room. I immediately brought the phone to Amma. As She spoke to them, I could tell that She was very upset. Somehow, the trees were moved anyway, because someone believed that they were too close together to grow.

Amma's response to this was very strong. Amma said that She had made a *sankalpa* (resolve) for those trees when She asked them to be planted by Her room. Planting the trees with Amma's resolve was like a *pratishta* – the sacred ceremony of installing a deity in a temple. Amma had imbued these sacred trees with some of Her own life force, and digging them up was like killing a part of Her. On hearing this, our hearts were filled with sorrow. I prayed for the trees that were moved – that they would survive – but I had my doubts after hearing what Amma said.

Aside from this unfortunate incident, everything was going well and we were able to finish planting all of the other baby rudraksha trees. It was a joy to watch them grow, and grow they did! In five years they were

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20 feet tall! They were the fastest growing trees I had ever seen. If you were to visit the ashram, you would notice them everywhere. They are watching over us, protecting us, giving us shade as we as we go about our day.

Unfortunately, some time later, another incident happened as a result of lack of discrimination. This time, the results were even more devastating—the rudraksha trees were being cut down!

It was during a Devi Bhava program in San Ramon when I received the phone call. It was raining. The person talking on the phone sounded hysterical and I had trouble understanding her. Finally, I heard the words, "They are cutting down rudraksha trees! You have to tell Amma immediately, or else they will cut more!"

What? How could they do that? I went to Amma as fast as I could. No one actually wanted to tell Amma because we knew Her response would be so strong. These were *Her* trees. How could anyone do such a thing? My heart felt so heavy in that moment. I felt so sad for the earth. Was Amma taking on the sadness of the earth? So many trees are being slaughtered every year, every moment, every second of every day! They are our very life, and without them, how can humanity go on? I wanted to die right there.

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When we did convey the terrible news to Amma, She looked so upset. Amma asked to speak to those responsible for the cutting. On the phone, She spoke in a very intense tone; it was clear that She was deeply pained by what was happening. She told them that She did not even want to return to the ashram. She said those trees are more important to Her than Her own life.

We returned to the ashram with heavy hearts. Amma did not say much about it when we got back. I went to the place where they had cut the trees down. It looked like a graveyard, and the other rudraksha trees in the area seemed so sad. They are connected to one another – they grow together like a family. *How to move forward now,* I wondered.

I gave my love to the trees that still stood and said a prayer to Mother Earth and to Amma. I asked that She forgive us all. All of us are in some way destroying this earth. All I wanted to do in that moment was to surrender myself to Nature and do whatever I could to help restore the lost harmony we see all around us. The delicate harmony of Nature seems to be eroding at such a high speed. Amma's words echoed in my ear – a memory of Her saying that the harmony of Nature is already lost. I felt an unspeakable sadness. Suddenly, I remembered the rudraksha tree that was sick, and how

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Amma had said that it was my faith that healed it. A glimmer of hope lit up my heart. It was a reminder of the power that is within all of us. If we have faith to heal the planet, it will be possible. Of course, we have to act fast. Precious time is running out!

Where there is death, there is always new life. When we went to Australia again, I was determined to get more rudraksha trees. I wanted to plant more, and of course, I believed that Amma would, too. Some of us went to the rudraksha forest and harvested hundreds of seeds from the forest floor.

Amma told me that She wanted one hundred more rudraksha trees to be planted! I was so happy. I doubted that anyone would ever cut a rudraksha tree down again! So the way was clear for another chance to serve Amma by serving Mother Nature in the form of this sacred rudraksha.

One day, back at Amritapuri, a young man came running up to me to tell me that he had found a rudraksha seed! I nearly fell over. *Where? How? Is that even possible?* It has been only six years since we had planted them, and normally it takes seven years for the trees to bear fruit. He quickly took me to the tree that he thought had bore the seed. Sure enough, I looked up at this sacred tree and tears filled my eyes. The bright blue fruits were hanging from her branches. I ran to the

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tree and hugged and kissed her. *Oh, this tree is giving fruit!* I just could not believe it! I had to go to Amma right away and show Her.

A friend climbed the tree and took some of the berries, and we all went up to Amma together. Amma was busy giving darshan of course, but I was too excited to wait another moment. We showed the blue fruits to Her and She was ecstatic! She showed everyone and explained how it is God's grace that the rudraksha trees grow here because normally they only grow in the Himalayas. She said to collect as many seeds from the tree as possible. So, that is what we did.

We decided to make Amma a bracelet from the seeds. We spent the whole rest of the darshan program preparing it, and then brought it and put it on Amma's wrist. She wore that bracelet for many days, explaining to people that it was from Her rudraksha tree. She also said that it had always been Her wish to someday wear the seeds from her own trees as a bracelet. Amma told us that we should try to grow more saplings from the rest of the seeds from that tree.

I thought of Richard in that moment – of his desire to have the rudraksha trees growing here in the ashram, and how happy he would be to know how all of it manifested. Unfortunately, his body is no longer but I know his soul is here with the trees.

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I often think of Amma's words while planting. "If we haven't done any selfless act, we should plant a tree or sapling; that would be a truly selfless deed, benefiting others and ourselves." I only pray that my hands will always be in the dirt, serving our sacred Mother Nature, who is of course none other than our Beloved Amma.

Rudraksha Ki Jai!

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RUDRAKSHA

Seeds of Compassion

There is one Truth that shines through all of creation. Rivers and mountains, plants and animals, the sun, the moon and the stars, you and I...all are expressions of this one Reality. It is by assimilating this Truth in our lives, and thus gaining a deeper understanding, that we can discover the inherent beauty of diversity.

Children, when you are one with creation, when your heart is filled with nothing but love, all of Nature will be your friend and will serve you. Living harmoniously with Nature will in itself bring happiness and contentment.

– Amma

Mata Amritanandamayi Mission Trust
Amritapuri, Kerala, India

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